







# **RURAL BENGAL**

**'( Her Needs and Requirements )**

By

**H. S. M. ISHAQUE, B. Sc. ( Alig. ), M. Sc. ( Luck ),**  
**OF THE**  
**INDIAN CIVIL SERVICE.**

*With a foreword by*

**The Hon'ble Mr. H. S. Suhrawardy,**  
**M. A. (Oxon), B. C. L., Bar-at-law**  
**Minister, Labour and Commerce,**  
**Government of Bengal.**



**Published by—**

**Mr. . Gauriprasanna Biswas, M. A., B. T.**

(Assistant Headmaster, Govt-aided

B. L. H. E. School, Sirajganj).

**Member-in-charge**

Primary School Teachers' short-course Training,

THE CENTRAL RURAL DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL.

*SIRAJGANJ* ( DISTRICT PABNA, BENGAL. )

*First Published, January, 1938.*

PRINTED BY—

MOULVI A. M. ELAHI BUKSH.

at the **Nur-E-Elahi Press.**

**SIRAJGANJ.**

*Price Rs. 2/-*

**TO THE CAUSE OF THE POOR.**



# CONTENTS.

CHAPTER.		PAGE.
	FOREWORD BY THE HON'BLE MR. H. S. SUHRA- WARDY, M. A. (OXON), B. C. L., BAR-AT-LAW, MINIS- TER, LABOUR AND COMMERCE, GOVERNMENT OF BENGAL.	
	AUTHOR'S PREFACE                    ...                    ...                    ...	i
	PUBLISHER'S NOTE                    ...                    ...                    ...	v
I.	RURAL DEVELOPMENT (GENERAL)                    ...                    ...	1
	<p>Various aspects of the expression R. D. Its scope and limitation—features of R. D. programmes in various districts and provinces. Voluntary effort in R. D.— Sir John Anderson's definition—definite meaning for continuity of programme. Need of fixing primary functions of R. D. worker—his limitations. Work done elsewhere in Bengal—personal explanation. How the ideas were evolved at Sirajganj—reference to the 4 addresses on :—</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">(1) U. Bd., (2) Debt Conciliation, Agriculture and Industries. (3) Education &amp; (4) Rural Develop- ment—what U. Bds. can do.</p>	
II.	RURAL INDEBTEDNESS.                    ...                    ...	10
	<p>Chief economic problems—how to lighten the burden of debt, and augment sources of income. Indebted- ness—risk of socialistic revolution. Debt concilia- tion—a moratorium—Rural population and the Mahajan—need of limiting power of exploitation and providing alternative sources of credit. Money- lenders' Bill—Earning power of rural population.</p>	

Debts analysed—productive and unproductive debts. 5% quite enough for village Mahajan. Productive debts—for seed, cattle or purchase of land. Result of economic enquiry held in Sirajganj last year—Co-operative's inability to pay the current demand of interest. Debts—a necessity and Mahajan to get profit. Agriculturist countries of the world—special legislation for cultivators' debt—legislation needed for Bengal peasantry.

III. CO-OPERATION. ... .. 18

Review of the Co-operative movement in Bengal. Critical analysis—Indebtedness—Co-operative spirit—high rate of interest—Mahajan and Co-operative Bank. Co-operation—the need of developing new Co-operative system to suit Indian conditions—need of co-operative propaganda. Need of improving sources of income of co-operative debtors by improving Agriculture and Industries. Supervisors to be qualified agricultural experts—rate of interest—5% from societies—saving to be made compulsory—creation of education fund, medical help etc.

Provincial Bank to charge 4% from Mofussil banks. The theory of high rate of interest—Independent societies—a moratorium for arrear interest,—the supreme ethics of saving the peasantry. Co-operative debt and Debt Conciliation—suggestion—need of reviving the movement—Co-operative banks in each Thana—how to proceed. Development of Agriculture and industries—debt of the cultivators—Debt Conciliation Boards.

IV. AGRICULTURE. ... .. 38

General condition of Agriculture—Indian Agriculture—need of demonstration—warning. Limited resources of the State—self-help. Suggestion—a Demonstration Farm in each Union. Need of developing new crops and orchards. Farms to be developed to nurseries. How to start work—Sirajganj experi-

## CHAPTER.

## PAGE.

ment—the initial difficulties. Funds—responsibility of Central Boards, District and Union Boards—their willingness—qualified Agricultural demonstrators—practicability of the idea. Departmental demonstrator—Thana Farm under Thana Co-operative Banks—direct supervision of Co-operative staff trained in Agriculture. How to train them. Farms as paying concerns—cattle breed,—lead of H. E. the Viceroy—stud bulls—their maintenance—pasture lands in Bengal—silted up *beels* and river banks for grazing grounds—grazing cess. Holding and the Agricultural Debtors' Act—fragmentation—criticism of the Act. Suggestions. Minimum size.

V. COTTAGE INDUSTRIES. . . . . 51

Cottage Industries, a potentiality in rural economics. Weaving—provision of, employment. Difficulties—competition of mill-made and foreign goods. Payment of duty—policy of protection—increasing duty on coarse cloth. Petty cottage industries. Sirajganj Scheme—combination of capitalism and co operation—combination of business and training centres—factory school. Distribution of shares—business organiser and share-holders. Training school, a part of factory. The scheme and solution of several problems of industry. Chief defects of the present weaver. Revival of the industry—merits of Sirajganj scheme—training in new method—facilities for purchase and sale—weaving, a supplement to Agriculture—solution of *Bhadrolah* unemployment.

VI. EDUCATION. . . . . 63

Introduction—4 broad heads—Primary, Secondary, Female and Adult.

SECTION I. PRIMARY EDUCATION. . . . . 64

Primary Education Act,—Lack of interest and clash of interest—Educated unemployed—Leaders of thought,—the universities and illiteracy. Need of making

## CHAPTER.

## PAGE.

education free and compulsory—Sir Fazimuddin's Education Act. Funds and reduction of middle man's profit—Duty of the State—education cess. Distribution of schools—necessity, the criterion—the ideal—Reasons—wastage in education—subjects to be taught—religious education—Standard—condition of present Schools—efficiency of teachers—Sirajganj Teachers' Training Scheme—results—need of provincialization (*vide Appendix I.*)

## SECTION II. (SECONDARY EDUCATION) ... 79

Bias against H. E. School—school education—wrong ideal—the service craze. Vocational education—schools and specialisation in one of 3 subjects, Trade and commerce, technical education and industries, Agricultural Farming—schools to amalgamate if necessary—education self-paying. Number and distribution of H. E. Schools—3 miles radius—need of changing the ideal of education,—means and ability test—its advantages. Training of teachers in Agricultural short course practical training—Sirajganj scheme (*vide Appendix II.*)

## SECTION III. (FEMALE EDUCATION) ... 85

The fair sex and freedom—her nature and constitution—proper sphere—the ideal of female education. Economic independence for women—middle education equivalent to Matriculation and this latter equivalent to Graduation for girls—One High school in each subdivision. Primary and middle schools for girls—utilisation of existing primary and Middle school building—a special course—the good daughter, the good sister, the good housewife and the good mother classes (*vide Appendix III*)

## SECTION IV. (ADULT EDUCATION) ... 92

Adult education—Western model—Indian masses—three R's—Adult Education Committee of Bengal's

## CHAPTER.

## PAGE.

programme. A conception—mass literacy for all male adults—majority to be educated in 5 years—element of compulsion—the symbolical illiteracy tax. Night school in every village—accommodation and finance—mushti bhiksha and U. Bd grants—a C. O. for every 8 Unions—D. B. to contribute for lamps. Adult population and children. The special course and its contents—re-capitulation and details.

## APPENDIX I. ... .. i—vii

Syllabus of Primary School Teachers' short-course training.

## APPENDIX II. ... .. viii—x

A scheme for opening Agricultural garden or farm in H. E. and M. E. Schools.

## APPENDIX III ... .. xi—xvi

Syllabus of a four years' course of Girls' Education.

## VII. THE UNION BOARD. ... .. 103

Union Boards—their role in rural uplift—common defects—low assessment U. S. 37 (b) inequalities in assessment—reasons—chronic ills. Main function of Union Boards—statutory obligation,—other duties of Union Boards. Need of high assessment U. S. 37 (b) discussion of the position—need for action U. S. 40 V. S. G. Act—how tax on increasing incomes should be levied—success in Sirajganj,—difficulties—remedies—classification—minor reforms. Expenditure on education—how to increase it to finance night schools. Boards controlled by indisciplined "Bhadraloks"—need of vesting Executive Officers with powers to control part II of Union Board budgets. Step not antidemocratic—practice of nomination to local bodies—Executive Officer—his authority from popular Government. Majority of Boards composed of sensible men. Example of Sirajganj.



CHAPTER.	PAGE
<i>Vide Appendix IV. (at the end of the book)</i>	i—iv
(i) Classification of U. B's—system of marking—measure of efficiency.	
(ii) U. B. Assessment—jurisdiction of Civil Courts— —anomaly—litigation—suggested remedy.	

VIII. RURAL DEVELOPMENT (proper).	124
-----------------------------------	-----

## SECTION I.

Introduction—short history—start in Sirajganj in October 1936—questionnaire to leading men. The conference—organisation—a Newspaper, the *Palli Prodip*—R.D. circulars—results. The brightest side—new spirit of self-reliance—service to fellow-beings—qualities in a public worker—aims and objects to educate—to improve sanitation—to build better Bengal—self-help. Programme—sanitation—communication—sports and education—need of common clubs in India. Use of existing school building for girls, boys, adults—clubs in the night—new sheds by subscribed bamboos and straw. A night school for every village—Mushti Bhiksha and U. Bd. grants.

## SECTION II. 134

Organisation—constitution of village committees,—Union Societies,—Thana association—Central R. D. Council—organisation at Sirajganj—the results of experience—members-in-charge—separate portfolio system—how to guide the workers in the council—selection of right type of men—their essential qualities—the oath—its effects. Reorganisation after test—future worker.

## SECTION III. 140

Finance—general—R. D. programme—self-help—how to finance various items of the programme—Dist. Bds. and Co-operative Banks and U. Bds., grants etc.—their co-ordination—U. Boards,—R. D. workers—road programmes—funds—U. Bds. to finance adult education—its advantages.

CHAPTER.	PAGE.
SECTION IV. ... ..	143
Amusement—village life—night schools—strain— remedies—gramophones—instructive music—practi- cability of the idea—expenditure and D. Bds. Brata- chari movement—its connection with R. D. pro- gramme.	
SECTION V. ... ..	147
Inspection and encouragement—mass meetings—R. D. days and weeks—Sources from which workers should be collected for the purpose -- diaries to Union and Captain Secy's— R. D. Circulars— care in dealing with U. Bds. Recognition—challenge cup and Medals—challenge shield for best village in each Thana and in the whole Subdivision— Medal to Union Secretaries, Presidents and workers. The basis of decision—the competition scheme, The Judges, Concluding remarks.	
• <i>Vide Appendix IV A.</i> ( at the end of the book ) v—x	
(i) Additional sources of funds for R. D. <i>Iswar</i> <i>Britti</i> & merchants — suggestions — regulation of collection.	
(ii) Inspection of R. D. work— a new agency.	
(iii) R. D. Diary Form.	
(iv) Propaganda officer with magic lanterns, cinema, gramophones, wireless set—a weekly news- paper—circulation.	
IX. ECONOMY IN PUBLIC SERVICES. ... ..	154
SECTION I. ... ..	154
False notions about the high pay of Government Officers,—the correct angle of vision to look at offi- cers—the true line of economy.	
SECTION II. ... ..	157
Suggestions, amalgamation of S. R.'s, S. I.'s. of Schools, Special Officers and C.O.'s.—short history of the proposal,—reasons—criticism of the proposal by	

CHAPTER.	PAGE.
Divisional Inspector of Schools. D. S. Officers—their jurisdiction—waste of time in duplication of journeys by various officers. 8-Union-area—Charge or Unit Officers—practicability—reference to statements—short course training in inspection work—saving of 3,50,000/- for the whole province—easy control; Collector to act under D. P. I.,—conclusion.	
SECTION III. ... ..	171
P. W. D., District Engineering staff—the saving utilised.	
Vide Appendix V. (at the end of the book)	
Summary of statements A—E containing data to illustrate Sec. II, Chapter IX—cost, savings, reduction, and absorption of the surplus staff. Suggestions for the recruitment of the new services—responsibilities of the present Executive.	
X, RECAPITULATION AND THE FUTURE. ...	174
Money-lenders—capitalists—humanity—debtor—State—co-operation—credit—voluntary effort—Executive—the necessary will—safeguarding the interest of castes & communities—mutual accommodation—conclusion.	
Appendices IV & IV (A) ...	i—x
Appendix V ... ..	i—xi

---

## Foreword.

I consider it a privilege to be asked to write a Foreword to this book. It will hardly be an exaggeration to state that it is only rural reconstruction work taken up in real earnest that can to-day save the people of Bengal. The first and the most important step consists in awaking the people from their lethargy, in arousing in them the consciousness that it is their duty to co-operate with each other to improve their own condition, and that they have in themselves enough latent resources which, pooled together, can solve most of the problems of the countryside. The needs and requirements of different areas may vary, but only within narrow limits : some places may be usually affected by drought, others by floods ; some areas may have been decimated by malaria and in others the conditions may not have deteriorated to that extent. There are, however, certain requirements which are common to all the rural areas. It is unnecessary for me to enumerate them, as they have been to a very large extent dealt with in this most admirable book, and once the people of each area begin to think out their own requirements and the ways and means of improving their condition, they will undoubtedly find more and more subjects to engage their attention. There appears, however, to be an inherent weakness in this kind of work, viz : that a great deal

depends upon the personality and the drive of an individual officer who inspires and directs the operations. There is therefore great danger of a lack of continuity in the work and of a relapse, not only on the departure of that particular officer, but due to the diminution in enthusiasm on the part of workers, who are being called upon to take up arduous duties through purely altruistic motives. It is therefore imperative, firstly, to arouse the consciousness of the people so as to make them independent of external influences, to educate them in the principles of self-help—an education which will be greatly accelerated when they see before them the fruits of their own self-help, and, secondly, to create a permanent organisation linked up in some form or other with local self-governing institutions, which will thus give to it a degree of continuity. Mr. Ishaque has succeeded admirably in doing both. The achievements of his organisation within the last year have been so stupendous and magnificent that they have exceeded all possible expectations as to the potentialities of self-help and have opened a new vista with illimitable prospects. The people have been aroused from their lethargy; futile petitions for grants and subventions have given way to the spirit of self-sacrifice and of co-operation, and, rescued from the darkness of despair, they now look forward with hope to a new dawn, which will ripen in due course to the brightness of a noon-day sun. The subdivisional organisation has its foundations in village organisations, and welfare work has pervaded almost

all the departments of rural activity. The Education programme is ambitious, but the success already achieved is almost incredible. The aim is to establish night schools for adults in every village and a Boys' and a Girls' School for every one square mile of area, and a Middle English School for every 12 square miles. Already 1500 night schools, 500 new girls' schools, 750 boys' schools and 15 Middle English schools have been established. There are training camps for teachers and public libraries with play-grounds and clubs have been attached to the existing school buildings. It would indeed seem that if each locality attempted to solve its own educational problems through its rural reconstruction organisation, it could do so with little outside assistance. In the department of agriculture 21 model farms have been opened; improved ploughs and seeds have been supplied; demonstrators have been appointed for each of three circles to guide and advise the cultivators, and it is expected to open a dozen more farms. Persons have been induced to donate ten stud-bulls. Weaving factory schools have been established for training unemployed youths with a small share capital subscribed by the villagers themselves. Jungles have been cleared; waterhyacinth destroyed; stagnant pools filled up; drainage improved; new roads laid down and old roads reclaimed. There is also a weekly paper which carries to the villagers the message of hope and gives them information regarding the work that has been done, that can be done and that should be done. These are wonderful achievements, but, greatest of all is the

achievement of having inspired a band of selfless workers, with unbounded and ever-increasing enthusiasm, who in their turn have infused new life and vigour and hope amongst the public. They have falsified the theory that the Indian cultivator is conservative and is not prepared to improve his condition. Given the right direction and the right inspiration, he is ready to take every advantage of facilities for improving his condition. If he has not done so up till now, the fault has not lain with him.

There is just one other problem that needs consideration, viz: how to ensure the constant guidance and supervision and impetus so necessary for this work. A sub-division is perhaps too big a unit through which to control the manifold activities of rural reconstruction society. It is only an exceptional person, a man not only brilliant but hard-working and self-annihilating, a man prepared to undertake the work in a spirit of fanaticism, who can sufficiently guide and control all the activities. It may indeed be considered desirable to create smaller administrative units and adjust and re-distribute the duties of the officers of Government.

I have the greatest pleasure in commending this book to the consideration of all persons interested in the welfare of India. It is replete with ideas and suggestions; it embodies the practical results of the work of an officer who has given his best to this work and has made it the greatest interest of his life. It has the merit of being practical, and the greater merit of success.

I have every hope that the work which is being done in Seraiganj under the guidance of Mr. Ishaque will be a valuable guide to rural reconstruction work in general.

Calcutta,  
The 10th January,  
1938.

H. S. Suhrawardy.

### Errata

<i>Page</i>	<i>l</i>	<i>no</i>	<i>for</i>	<i>"word in"</i>	<i>Please read</i>	<i>"world, is"</i>
62,	l	20	•			
"	x,	l	8,	"difficult problem"	"	"difficult problem"
"	2,	l	12	"everything"	"	everything"
"	75,	l	20	"To"	"	"Two"
"	115,	l	3	"46%"	"	"64%"
"	124,	} Chap.VII caption		"Rural Development"	"	"Rural Development (Particular)"
"	146,			(General)"	"	
"	146,	l	12	"times"	"	"items"
"	151,	last para,		before Vice President,	"	President.
Appendix V	} l 32		"	"Junnior"	"	"Junior"
Page VII			"		"	





## Preface.

On the 26th July, 1937, I was sitting in the Shazadpur Dak Bungalow when one of my favourite workers, Mr. Abdul Hye, M. A., Circle Officer, Shazadpur, came in to discuss some points regarding the rural development movement. After he had gone I felt that the time had come when the programme and instructions contained in my Rural Development addresses and circulars should be consolidated in the form of a booklet. The urge to write took me to the desk. The introduction took a general trend and I found I had got into a mess of ideas. I could not, however, make much progress that day. More urgent public duties awaited my attention.

Next day I tried again but for the same reasons could not make much headway. Things continued in this way and it was after a whole week had passed that I could get to the end of the first chapter.

In the meantime my wife who kept a very close watch on the amount of work I did every day, went away home leaving me free to indulge in as much hard work as I desired, particularly on topics that interested me so much and for which official duties never spared me peace and leisure. Even then the heavy

programme of meetings at head-quarters in the first fortnight with all the routine work on top, hardly spared me time for concentrated thinking. Then there is the limit of 24 hours and one must keep fit to work. Still I added another three chapters by the 16th.

On the 17th August I went out on tour for a week in the launch, and though I had a heavy programme to go through, I found more leisure than at headquarters, and in these 7 days I have written the remaining 6 chapters which occupy more than two-thirds of the book. I have, ofcourse, made a rather liberal use of the material I already possessed, my several addresses and notes, but this could be hardly helped as I was so very much pressed for time.

To-morrow the 24th I hope to give away these sheets to the typists and, I have no doubt they will make a mess of the composition. But I cannot possibly spare time to look into the typed copies. On the 28th I hope to go away on a short holiday to Kashmere and before that all the works pending in the office must be disposed of. But even when due allowance has been made for all these difficulties, the book may have many faults. Many useful ideas may have been omitted, and discussions left incomplete. The language may lack polish that a second reading could give. I can only hope that considering the pressure of work and the hurry with which the book has been written my readers will not take these defects too seriously. My

trusted colleague and friend Babu Gauri prasanna Biswas, M. A., B. T., has very kindly undertaken to publish it and it is now for him to make it what it would be. If the book is found readable the credit would be mostly his.

My object in writing this book is nothing more than to throw some light on the real problems of Rural Bengal and to indicate the possible and practicable lines of improvement in a concrete form. I do not claim finality for my findings and proposals. But however insignificant, I am a worker, and have tested most of my ideas. This has naturally given me enhanced confidence and my expressions may have, at times, become too strong. It is, therefore, possible that in places my observations may appear pungent to those with whom I have differed, even though they are directed neither against any particular individual nor against any particular class. I may have, for instance, questioned the honesty of the so-called champions of the rural masses; I may have, at times, described them as mere dreamers or platitudinists whose solicitude for the masses is confined to fiery speeches and active opposition to all practical and useful activities. The expressions have their justification, but they are not meant to antagonise any one. Even if only a few would imbibe this new spirit, I would consider myself very lucky indeed, and my labours amply rewarded.

In conclusion let me hope the book will make a useful contribution to the cause of rural uplift in India and particularly in Bengal. It may also be of some help to those who have been entrusted with the task of moulding the destinies of the country. Here and there touches of skepticism will be observed, but in reality I am a bold and confident optimist. I have faith in man's constructive genius, howsoever bad the material, and I look forward, very confidently to see Bengal, develop into a brighter and happier country ere long. I wish to see her champions burn down all their personal jealousies and class interests in a new flame, the passion of raising and uplifting Bengal's down-trodden and neglected masses. I wish to see her avowed spokesmen search their hearts for truth and sincerity and face the realities in an honest and truly patriotic spirit. Let the spirit of democracy be translated into practice. Let her vitalising rays brighten not only the homes of the rich, but also the broken hamlets of the poor. MAY THAT GLORIOUS DAWN BREAK EARLY.

SIRAJGANJ,  
The 23rd. August, 1937.

}

S. M. I.

## Publisher's Note.

The following few pages contain the history of the Rural Development Scheme inaugurated by the author in the Subdivision of Serajganj (District Pabna, Bengal) together with some of his ideas of educational and economic reforms which may give the reader enough food for thought and provide enough guidance for workers engaged in similar activities.

Villages, specially in an agricultural country like India, are the life-centres of the nation ; but the vibrations of life are hardly palpable there partly due to poverty and partly due to the appalling illiteracy that prevails. The best methods of utilising the resources at their disposal are unknown to the villagers.

Now that India is at the threshold of a constitutional Renaissance under a people's government, her villages need a special treatment if she is to be led abreast of her racing sister countries. The villagers must be made to outlive their torpor of by-gone days. They must be given a lead to make the most of their present situation. The bickerings and factions of the present which are more imaginary and evanescent than real and permanent must be given an immediate burial. In the words of Mr. F. L. Brayne, one of the accredited pioneers in the sphere of Rural Reconstruction in the Punjab, "Capitalist and agriculturist, rural and urban, official and non-official, landowner and tenant, instead of abandoning the land while they fight to get the most out of each other, must all work together to get the most out of the land. .... Self-help and mutual help are the only remedies for our difficulties and these must be born of a knowledge that a better, happier and healthier life is possible,

and of a firm desire and intention to achieve that higher standard of life if it is humanly possible to do so."

The same is the ideal held up by the author before the workers in this subdivision though the methods may differ. In the midst of multifarious administrative activities his sole consuming passion is 'rural uplift' to make the subdivision of Serajganj better to-morrow than to-day. He has made a studious and extensive survey of the economic, agricultural and industrial possibilities of the subdivision and has launched an elaborate scheme of rural reconstruction which, unlike the sporadic and scattered attempts made in this direction elsewhere, is original and most comprehensive. I cannot do better than append hereto the Government communique issued last October which gives a correct estimate of what has so far been achieved. The Editor of the Statesman thought it fit to write a long leader on Rural Development work in Serajganj ( The Statesman of the 19th October, 1937. )

The author did not have sufficient time and opportunity, as will appear from his own preface also, to arrange his notes and writings and it was with difficulty that the copyist and the publisher could catch him and keep him to the pace. Further, the book had to be hurried through the press in an unusually short space of time and so defects in the printing and get-up were inevitable. But we do hope that if the gentle reader bears us to the end of this volume, we shall feel our humble labours amply rewarded.

SERAJGANJ (Bengal),  
The 22nd December,  
1937

PUBLISHER.

*With compliments to*

THE PRESS OFFICER,  
GOVERNMENT OF BENGAL,  
WRITERS' BUILDINGS,

Press-note, dated, Calcutta, the 7th. October, 1937.

( TRUE COPY )

RURAL UPLIFT IN SIRAJGANJ SUBDIVISION.

With "Better homes and villages" as the motto and the spirit of self-help and co-operative voluntary efforts as principle of operation a movement has been started for the improvement of rural areas and the amelioration of the condition of the people in the subdivision of Sirajganj. The movement initiated only about a year ago by the Subdivisional Officer Mr. H. S. M. Ishaque, I. C. S., and organised by him with the assistance of a few selfless official and non-official gentlemen, has achieved remarkable results in a surprisingly short time. He did not proceed to act haphazardly on hastily conceived schemes. He formulated a comprehensive scheme after a careful survey of the condition of the rural population and their needs. A Conference of the members of the Union Boards and other leading gentlemen of the Subdivision was then called where his scheme was thoroughly discussed and the programme of work and the lines of action were determined,



Dissemination of literacy amongst the illiterate masses was the principal item on the programme, as it is bound to be in any scheme of rural uplift. The other important items on the programme are the development of agriculture and industry, of communication and the improvement of sanitation and drainage.

To implement the scheme rural development organisations, composed of voluntary workers only, have been established all over the subdivision. There is a Central Rural Development Council at the headquarters station of the subdivision guiding and regulating the activities of a hierarchy of subordinate organisations established in each thana, Union Board and village. A band of earnest local workers having a flair for social uplift work is at the helm of these organisations.

For the liquidation of illiteracy the organisation aims at establishing a night school for adults in every village and a boys' and girls' school for every one square mile of area and a Middle English School for every twelve square miles. 1500 night schools have already been opened where 50,00 adults are receiving education. 500 new girls' schools and 750 new Boys' schools have been started attended by about 35,000 children. 15 middle English Schools have already been opened and 9 more are shortly expected to be opened. In many of the villages girls are taught in the morning, boys during the day and adults at night in the same building. Attempts are also being made to improve the existing primary schools.

For improving the standard of teaching, training camps under the supervision of qualified teachers have been opened in different centres and so far 300 teachers have been trained in

six centres. This training scheme cost Rs. 3000/- in the first session. This expenditure was met partly from Union Board contributions and partly from District School Board grant. The Principal of the David Hare Training College, Calcutta visited some of the camps and was impressed with the efficiency with which the teachers were being trained in their camps.

In order to create an atmosphere conducive to the spread of education a large number of public libraries with attached play grounds and clubs have been started in the existing school buildings. The desideratum of the organisers is to make primary education compulsory in the area not with the sanction of any law but by the pressure of public opinion.

For the improvement of agriculture 21 model farms have been opened. Improved ploughs and seeds have been supplied to these farms. The subdivision has been divided into 3 circles and a demonstrator appointed for each circle to look after the farms and to guide and advise the cultivators. About a dozen more such farms are expected to be opened shortly.

For the improvement of live stock, 10 stud bulls have been purchased at a cost of Rs. 1600/- donated by some charitable people of the subdivision. The bulls have been distributed in different areas and placed in charge of responsible persons.

Attempts are being made to revive the weaving industry for increasing the income of the agriculturists by affording them subsidiary occupation. 7 weaving factory schools have been started for training unemployed youths in the villages. Each such weaving factory school has been formed into a co-operative society or joint stock company with a share capital of Rs. 1200/- to Rs. 1500/- subscribed to by the villagers themselves.

Particular attention is being paid to the sanitary improvement of the villages. The village organizations are pushing on with the work of jungle clearance and destruction of water hyacinth. A large number of insanitary stagnant ditches have been filled up and the existing pools joined together along the natural slope of the villages. Many khals have been excavated in different parts of the subdivision to drain off stagnant water.

Communication is a difficult problem in the subdivision as during a great part of the year the whole area is submerged under water. To remove this difficulty, 500 new roads with a mileage of about 500 miles have been constructed and an equal number of old and disused roads with a mileage of about 350 miles have been reclaimed. This has proved a great boon to the people.

To encourage the workers and also with a view to accelerate the progress of the whole scheme a number of prizes for the best workers and shields for the best villages have been declared. This is expected to give a great impetus to the movement. A weekly organ devoted to the cause of villagers and their welfare has been started under the auspices of the Rural Development Council,

It must be said to the credit of Mr. Ishaque and his associates that before launching the scheme, they were neither deterred nor thwarted by the financial liabilities involved in implementing the scheme and the most remarkable thing about the movement is that it is being carried on practically without any monetary assistance from outside. No great cost has, however, to be incurred as the villagers themselves voluntarily and readily perform all the work that they can possibly do themselves. Necessary funds are raised from the

villagers themselves by Musti-collection, and by contributions from Union Boards.

Material results, considerable though they have been already, are not the only or the principal achievements of the movement. Its most outstanding achievement is the general awakening it has succeeded in creating amongst the lethargic and indifferent masses and the lesson that it is slowly and steadily instilling into their minds that they can improve their lot by their own efforts.



**A note from the President, R. D. Council,  
Sirajganj.**

" I would be failing in my duty if I do not record the names of the most prominent champions of the Rural Development Scheme at Sirajganj but for whose sincere and untiring efforts the scheme could not have achieved the success it has. The list has, however, to be very brief as there are hundreds of brilliant and devoted workers particularly in the rural areas and to mention the names of all would be to attempt to do too much. I have, therefore, confined myself to the few most steady of the chief executives of the Rural Development Council only.

1. Maulvi Saadat Hossain Choudhury, B. A., Deputy Magistrate,  
Vice-President. R. D. Council.
2. Maulvi Osman Goni, Chairman, Local Board, Member in charge  
of Organisation.
3. Mr. Gauriprasanna Biswas, M. A., B. T.,  
Member in charge of Teachers' Training (Publisher)
4. Maulvi Abul Hossain, Retired Inspector of Police, Member  
in charge of Adult Education.
5. Maulvi Amir Hossain, B. L., Member in charge of Secondary  
Education.
6. Babu Naresh Narayan Choudhury, M. A., B. L., Member  
in charge of Agriculture.
7. Maulvi Khaliluddin Talukder, Member in charge of Cottage  
Industries.
8. Maulvi Zahurul Islam, M. A., Editor of the "Palli-Prodip."
9. Babu Sasi Lal Roy, B. L., Secretary, B. L. School, Member in  
charge of Female Education and Joint-member  
in charge of Cottage Industries.
10. Maulvi Abdul Hye. M. A., Circle Officer, Shahazadpur.
11. Maulvi Mohammad Mohsin, B. A., Circle Officer, Sirajganj.
12. Babu Saileswar Singh Roy, B. A., Circle Officer, Ullapara.

# **Rural Development.**

## **( GENERAL. )**

The expression "Rural Development" has been applied to such a variety of activities and has been given such a diversity of interpretation by different persons that I am tempted to discuss at some length its many-sided aspects and its scope and limitations. The Government of India Rural Development grant of 1935-1936 was spent chiefly on :—

(1) Water supply, (2) Play grounds, (3) Dispensaries, (4) Agricultural farms and (5) Libraries. The 1937-40 grant has been earmarked for the first two heads to which two new items, namely, (6) Cattle improvement and (7) Communication and drainage have been added. The distinctive features of the Punjab Government programme as far as memory helps, seems to be consolidation of holding and co-operative activities. The Official R. D. programme of the Government of Bengal consists mainly of jute restriction and debt conciliation only.

Individual officials working independently have added still more variety. Some have paid concentrated attention to water hyacinth clearance, some to communication and jungle-cutting, while some others have tried to set up model villages equipped with their own

dispensary, post office, school, parks, broad ways and so on, presumably with a view to stimulate ideas and to realise the dream of a utopian countryside. 'Joint effort' has formed everywhere the basic principle, and considerable amount of useful work has been done by voluntary labour in many places. The most conspicuous monument of this kind is the Brahmanbaria Khal which demonstrated with abundant success and literally regenerated the power of self-help in Bengal. But what is the scale of values with which the importance and utility of each class of activity should be judged is still very much in the dark. Should anything and everything likely to help the villagers come under Rural Development or should the expression be given some particular and definite meaning? This is the question I propose to answer. His Excellency Sir J. Anderson, Governor of Bengal, has very rightly laid emphasis on voluntary effort in Rural Development work,—and I suppose to make his statement complete and sufficiently comprehensive,—and has also added, if I remember aright, that every department of the Government is concerned directly or indirectly with 'Rural Development.

His Excellency's statement is literally true and leaves little to be added. But if I may be permitted to say so, I fear such a definition is liable to suffer from its own strength, its comprehensiveness which may lead to mean everything in general and nothing in particular.

I do not deny that conditions will differ from province to province, from district to district, nay, from village to village and it is only fair that each village should be left free to evolve its own schemes suited to its own peculiar needs and requirements. But we can hardly forget that the calibre of the R. D. worker, if the movement is to penetrate the villagers, will remain very low for a considerable period of time and too many things may not be good for him. Besides, it is an undeniable fact that in activities of this nature, it is only one or two individuals, usually one—the executive head of a Dist. or Sub-division, who gives life and shape to these activities and to whom the people look for guidance and encouragement.

For the officers themselves it is a splendid thing. It provides them a unique opportunity to exercise initiative, test their own capacities and render useful service to the people. But in the absence of any well-defined and chalked-out programme, it also suffers from lack of continuity and cohesion and, may be, that for one year the people of a Sub-division or District may be found swimming all over the ponds after water hyacinth and in the next year, all their energy may have to be devoted to jungle-cutting or road-making or dancing or sports or something else. This has happened and will continue to happen and is not, after all, a very uncommon experience. It is therefore obvious and highly desirable that efforts should be made to systematise the R. D. movement



---

at least in respect of such essentials as may appear to be common factors all over the province of Bengal.

This leads me into the question of what these common factors can be, and may form the essential minima that the expression Rural Development should signify in Bengal. But before I proceed to discuss the merit of each point, I should like to make it clear first that, in my opinion, some activities, howsoever useful and urgent, e. g., water supply, agriculture and industries will, in practice, be found too heavy for the power of the ordinary village worker and should never be thrust upon him. Not that I mean to suggest that these important activities should be excluded from the field of Rural Development, but that they will demand a higher grade of worker and will have to be tackled in the main by state departments and other 'local' bodies as at present, with, of course, increased vigour and vitality derived from the reaction of the new spirit and the new life and activity that the movement is expected to infuse in the people.

In the discussions that will follow, my own ideas and conceptions of Rural Development and the experience gained from working the scheme on an extensive scale in the Sirajgunj Sub-division will naturally have an important bearing on my findings. I should, therefore, confess, at the outset, my shortcomings and drawbacks in this respect. Newspaper reports indicate that

---

considerable amount of good work has been done and is being done in Bogra, Khulna and many other centres in Bengal. But I am, very much in the dark whether these attempts have been sporadic in their nature or any effort to systematise the work and to carry the spark into every village has been made. Of what has been done elsewhere outside the province I know very little indeed. Quite apart from the fact that what holds good in the Punjab or U. P. may not hold good in Bengal, and blind imitation may be useless. I do not get much leisure to read and even when I do get some, I do not always find foreign models very helpful. Not being a respecter of persons I do not accept things on their face value. I must be convinced. I have, therefore, to depend mainly for all my ideas and inspirations upon the school of experience and have to test them in the laboratory of observation and personal reasoning. It helps. If nothing more, it saves me from going 'nationalist' and gives a practical touch to most of my ideas and schemes.

One word more before this personal explanation is closed. Sporadic efforts and disconnected bits, however bright, have no appeal for me. Being an optimist I have a tendency to plan on a comprehensive scale. In the U. Bd. and R. D. conference, held at Serajgunj in October, 1936, which I had the privilege to convene, the delegates were welcomed in the following terms :—

---

“Such Conferences have been held elsewhere and are being held every now and then. But it is not every Conference that leaves a permanent impression on those who are called upon to attend it, nor does every Conference prove fruitful of results. Let us hope ours will not fall into that class. On the contrary, it will as I have visualised, mark a new era in the history of an all-round development of the Sirajgunj Sub-division.”

Another passage from the same address may be quoted. If nothing more, it will clearly explain the method of work and the mind of the worker in Sirajgunj.

“I feel I should not only run the administrative machinery, but must also contribute substantially to the shaping of the destinies of the people under my charge. This, as you can easily appreciate, is a tremendous responsibility and imposes severe checks on any careless meddling with the existing order of things. The S. D. O. cannot recklessly start off with preconceived ideas or jump to conclusions in a nonchalant way. He cannot afford to make mistakes or run the risk of pushing up things which may ultimately prove to be of doubtful validity. He must circumspect and circumspect very cautiously. He must think and think hard with all the available materials and data before him. He must feel sure of every inch of the ground before he takes one step forward. But once he is satisfied and his mind made up, he should give complete freedom to his administrative genius. He should march on boldly

and, not only that, I should say, go headlong with maximum speed and enthusiasm until all the obstacles have been met and the goal reached.

But officers are individuals and differ in their temperament and outlook. There is the type of officer who is content with making here and there a model for the rest to follow. This is an effective policy for immediate results but limited in scope and utility.

The other type is not content with scattered bits here and there but treats the subject as whole. He looks at things with a much wider angle of vision and plans out on a comprehensive scale, redistributing, where necessary, and creating new ones where nonexistent, so that every piece is so placed and linked up with the others as to give a complete system comprehending one and all. Seldom does this scheme bear immediate results; but if and when it does, it effects a substantial improvement. It is to this latter type that I have the privilege or otherwise to belong.

Before this Conference was called, an elaborate questionnaire was issued to all the leading men and organisations to find what, in their opinion, the Subdivision really needed for its all-round development. The replies were examined, statistics collected and further enquiries made to find how far my solutions and ideas could stand the test of practical application. The findings have been embodied in 4 Addresses on (1) Union Boards, (2)

---

Rural Indebtedness, Agriculture and Industries (3) Education and (4) Rural Development. These addresses are still useful and will make interesting reading for any one in Bengal who cares to look into them.

In the chapters that will follow, the importance of each subject, its relation to and bearing on Rural Development and the limitations and capacity of various Rural Development organisations in tackling these problems will be discussed at some length. For the present it is enough to say that experience has only confirmed my original ideas and I do think that the expression "R. D.," though literally it may mean many things, should be given some more definite and particular meaning so that the village worker may know exactly what his primary duties are and may thus be in a position to concentrate on his work.

It is needless to observe that the condition of the rural areas of Bengal is most deplorable. Yet I vividly see signs of a new life and refuse to believe that the difficulties deny solutions. In fact, I feel more and more hopeful every day and see a bright future ahead and 'not very remote either, if statesmen can bring sufficient vision' and determination to bear upon the problems. The greatest curse of rural Bengal, as really of the whole of India, is the burden of debt. The recent legislation about Debt Conciliation, I am sure, will bring about a substantial relief for the time

being. Next in importance is the improvement of Agriculture and the development of cottage industries. Both these problems admit of easy and practical solutions if attempt is made on the right lines and redtape is given a good shake. Considerable economy can be effected in many directions to find money for these activities on a practical scale.

Education, the keynote to all other improvements, can be tackled effectively if the system is reorganised and a little more push and go put into it. Every body seems anxious to give it, every body wants it and I see no reason why the province should find it beyond its means or beyond the means of the people who must have it. I might be guilty of talking platitudes or of being a visionary, but I honestly believe that in 10 years half of the population of Bengal can be given considerable amount of literacy. The Union Boards can be developed to their fullest capacity if we really know how to do it and they can successfully tackle medical help and water supply and can also contribute substantially towards mass education. The problem of improving village sanitation and drainage, village communication, mass education and the development of healthy, social and corporate life in the village mainly by voluntary labour and joint effort should remain exclusively the province of the Rural Development worker.

---

## **CHAPTER II.**

### **Rural Indebtedness.**

#### **Agriculture & Industries.**

The economic problems of this Sub-Division as of most other places resolve themselves into two heads, viz, (1) how to lighten the burden of the heavily indebted peasantry (2) how to improve and augment his sources of income.

There is no doubt that the agriculturists and the generality of the rural population of India are over head and ears in debt, and this burden has become so heavy that it can no longer be ignored if they and their future generation are to be saved from perpetual serfdom. Agricultural produce have fallen in price, and the cultivator can no longer make both ends meet and yet pay something to his creditor. The rates of interests have been exorbitant and the loans have multiplied themselves rapidly with the result that, in most cases, even the sale of the landed property of the cultivator cannot redeem his debt.

Thus some of cultivators have become mere labourers and the process continues unabated. What would be the inevitable consequence of this, one shrinks to think, and yet it would be folly to ignore the fact that socialistic

---

propaganda is rapidly penetrating into the villages and a feeling is growing amongst many of the rural populace to-day that they would like to start with a clean slate. It is a subject I would rather have not discussed, had not the sense of duty impelled me to do so. The situation is very alarming indeed and I must put the pros and cons before you clearly and frankly. India is not Russia nor is India a country inhabited by a homogeneous people. It is a proverbially conservative country and the people are sharply divided between their one hundred and one religions and creeds. Any attempt to change the existing order by a drastic upheaval as some of the great leaders seem to aim at, will, if it ever comes, in no time resolve itself into warring factions based on religious differences. A period of serious strife will follow and ultimately the whole thing will end in a disaster. It will be a tremendous tragedy which will have few parallels in History. No one will gain and the enthusiasts and obstinate of both sides will suffer most. So look ahead and learn while there is yet time to accommodate each other's situation and points of view. You have to live together and you must look upon each other as one brotherhood. The creditors and debtors both must change their minds and meet together as friends and evolve a new basis of settlement of their old debts to save their motherland from the risk of a serious catastrophe.

Thanks to the timely action of the Government of Bengal and to the genius of a member of the I. C. S.



who introduced the system of Debt Settlement Board in Bengal also, the Bengal Agricultural Debtors' Act has been passed into law. Debt Conciliation Boards have been formed and offer both the creditors and the debtors an equal and fair opportunity to sit together and come to an amicable settlement of their debts. The Sub-Divisional Board will enforce this settlement if and when necessary. The boards thus give you a splendid opportunity to rebuild your shattered economics if you take advantage of them.

But when all this has been done and your debts amicably fixed up and settled, do not forget for a moment that, after all, this debt settlement is something like an insolvency procedure and does not add a penny to your income or in any way increase your national wealth. It is at best a moratorium, an emergency measure, introduced for a short time. Within five years you may find yourselves indebted again to the same extent. So you must be on your guard and explore, side by side, the avenues of increasing your source of income. Your productive power must increase. This is the real thing, the problem of all problems. Let us see if we can do something.

The above extract, taken from my address on Debt Conciliation, Agriculture and Industries, written about this time last year, clearly embodies my view on the subject. I do believe that Debt Conciliation is easily the most useful piece of legislation that was enacted

in the last few years. It has not come a minute too early. The moratorium could not be delayed another moment. It will not only give immediate relief to the peasantry but will also save the country from the risk of a socialistic revolution which some of the great nationalist socialists seem to have been aiming at, without probably realising fully how the country would reach to it after the first wave of enthusiasm had subsided. However, this was by the way. The thing that really matters is that Debt Conciliation, as above, will not go very far or for very long.

• The rural population can never do without bankers and Mahajans and it is clear that something more, some limitation to the power of the banker to exploit the masses and some alternative machinery to meet the financial demands of the people have immediately to be set up. The Money Lenders' Bill, passed by the outgoing legislature does not, in my opinion, offer enough protection to the peasantry. 10% per annum is far too high a rate of interest for the impoverished cultivator to pay in spite of the great fertility of the Bengal soil. There is hardly any organised farming in the Province, and the holding, in the majority of cases, are so small that the annual yield is barely enough to meet the cost of living and cultivation. A good percentage of the rural population is altogether landless and has to work for an average of -74/- a day, and that too is seasonal. A salary of Rs. 12/- per annum with food is

---

considered pretty 'good for grown-up boys between the ages of 14 and 18. In fact, if a fully grown-up earning member of a family can earn, all told, a sum of Rs. 50/- in the whole year, he considers himself pretty well-off. If this be the case, is it conceivable that a cultivator who falls into the misfortune of incurring a debt will ever in his life time be able to pay up the principal at 10% interest and secure freedom from the perpetual bondage of debt?

Let us go a little deeper into the question. Debts are either productive or unproductive. If unproductive, as is normally the case, with the peasantry it is obvious that, in 99 percent cases, the individual incurring the debt must be in very straitened circumstances. May be that, off and on, a few cultivators might indulge in debts for the sake of luxury or for fun. But such instances have become so rare in recent years that only those who cannot get out of a rigid groove of obsolete ideas, will attach any importance to them. The majority of debts are incurred, not for fun, but to keep the body and soul together during the dull seasons, to give a piece of cloth to the half-naked wife, to arrange the funeral of a dead body or to save the land from being auction-sold for non-payment of rent. It will be found that in all these cases the annual income of the family would fall far short of its bare needs of subsistence and if, on top of that, a debt has to be incurred at an annual interest of 10%, it

would be nothing short of a calamity. The debt would bring in a permanent liability never to be satisfied and never to be cleared. A part of the interest may perhaps be paid, but the principal will never be touched, and will remain as before only to multiply at every stage of limitation. This is, of course begging the question. "Why any interest at all, why any debt even?" My reply is that sensible men choose the lesser of the two evils, and try to minimise its evil consequence as much as practical difficulties permit. Debts cannot be avoided, and the lesser the interest, the better for those whom circumstances compel to borrow. As for the money lender, well, I honestly believe that in a country like India, where the standard of living is so miserably low, and where capital has still to discover new and better avenues for higher profit, a village Mahajan should have no reason to grumble if he gets a profit of five for every hundred in the year.

Let us now examine the position with regard to the other class, the productive debts. As pointed out before, there is very little organised farming in this country and productive debts, if they can be so called, are incurred either to purchase seed and cattle or to take settlement or buy new lands. If seed and cattle, the observations made in respect of unproductive debt will very rarely apply to these cases also. The average yield per bigha of land seldom exceeds Rs. 15/- per annum and this does not include the huge cost of cultivation

which the peasantry do not realise, partly, because labour and energy is cheap and partly because everything is done by the cultivator and his family themselves who have no other use for their time. On an average, Rs. 2/- per bigha has to be paid to the landlord leaving a balance of Rs. 13/- per bigha. The size of the average holdings seldom exceeds 5 to 6 bighas which would bring about Rs. 6/8/- p. mensem or an income of Rs. 78/- per annum. An average family consisting of husband and wife and one or two children would need at least Rs 8/- p. m, at the rate of Rs. 2/- per head per month for their maintenance—a deficit of Rs. 6/- per year. How is the peasant going to pay an interest of 10%, not to speak of the principal?

If the debt has been incurred to take settlement of land or to buy land which is very nearly the same, each bigha, on an average, will cost about Rs. 75/-. At 10 per cent the annual interest would come to Rs. 7/8/- leaving a balance of Rs. 7/8/- to meet rents, price of seed and cattle and a whole year's labour of the cultivator. Will he be able ever in his life to get out of this debt? Can he ever clear the principal? I wonder.

Lest my observations should be challenged, I may add that about this time last year, I had instituted an elaborate economic enquiry into the conditions of the Co-operative debtors—men of the upper middle class in the peasantry. About 1500 families were examined all over the Sub-division. The statistics only reveal the

---

obvious—at least it has been so to me for a long time—that the annual income of the debtors minus cost of living falls far short of the demand of the annual interest due from them. As for the principal, of course, they do not hope to pay in this life.

I repeat once again that sensible men choose the lesser of the two evils. Debts have been incurred in the past and will continue to be incurred in the future. It is an unavoidable evil and we cannot have them without making the business sufficiently paying for the moneylender. But it should be proportionate and in consonance with the circumstances of the debtor, the profit he makes and the prevailing conditions in the country. Very much better off and very much more highly organised countries, where agriculture is considered a staple industry, have enacted special legislation for the debt of the agriculturist. If the statesmen of the country mean to do something tangible and are really anxious to save the peasantry from perpetual serfdom, they cannot avoid similar legislation for the cultivator of Bengal. 5% interest is not a very small margin of profit for the village moneylender to look for.

In the next chapter I will discuss how and what alternative system of providing credit to the peasantry should be set up which would naturally lead me into a discussion of the Co-operative movement in Bengal.

---

## CHAPTER III.

### Co-operation.

In January 1936, I had occasion to address a conference of the Co-operators of Patuakhali Sub-Division. The general observation made in that address applied then and apply to-day to the whole co-operative movement in Bengal. It will save me time if I quote relevant portions.—

“The Co-operative movement has completed 15 years of its existence and it is time that its position was critically reviewed both with respect to its shortcomings as well as with respect to the success it has achieved.

From small beginnings the movement has slowly and steadily expanded, but it must be remembered that it has had no smooth sailing. In its onward march the movement had to pass through many difficult periods and receive many setbacks. It is however gratifying to note that it has survived them all and has at last emerged alive and in tact, even out of the longest and most distressing economic depression that our country ever had to face in recent times.

The dangers are however not over yet. More are still ahead. In fact it seems to me that the movement is, at present, faced and very lightly too, with a problem which threatens its very existence. Stripped of its early charm of novelty the movement lies open to-day to the critical examination whether it is really worth the pains that have been taken for it, whether it has really fulfilled any of the hopes and expectations that its early promoters promised, whether it has effected, to any appreciable degree, the colossal indebtedness of the rural population, whether it has developed to any reasonable extent the ideal of self-reliance, mutual help, the habit of frugality and saving, whether it has not merely provided an additional attractive source of cheap loans without their necessary counterparts, the redemption of other loans and put a check to extravagance and lastly whether it is not thoroughly rotten from inside and looks healthy on the surface only.

This is the ordeal which the movement has to pass through. If it does succeed, it will deserve to be maintained, patronised and expanded. If it fails, it will have to go and be doomed.

These are, then, the problems that I want you, gentlemen, to apply your minds to. The ordeal is not an easy one and it should not be so. But no reason to lose heart. There is always somewhere silver line behind the dark clouds, a ray of hope and there will



---

be no dearth of guides and men to show you the path if you have the mind, the determination and the energy to follow and keep pace. I am one of those who will be willing to place their services at your disposal and with this object I wish to discuss with you to-day, as a preliminary measure, what is wrong with your co-operative movement and what can be done to set it right, give it vitality and make it healthy, lively, useful and true to co-operative ideals.

There are altogether about 4000 members of co-operative Societies and the *per capita* indebtedness will approximately come to be Rs. 100/- per co-operator. This huge rate of indebtedness of the co-operators which takes no account of other borrowing and which, for all that I know, may be of the same proportion as that of the non-members, is hard to justify. Let us weigh the possible considerations,—

(a) That by this debt the members have been substantially benefited and that it has saved their lands and properties which would have been altogether lost otherwise, or that this debt was absolutely inevitable and is only a lesser of the two evils.

(b) That but for the Co-operative movement these members would have been either much more heavily indebted to the exacting moneylenders or would have become paupers.

---

(c) That the Co-operative movement has helped them in other ways, say in building up their financial position, in improving their agriculture and increasing their produce, has developed in them habits of frugality, saving, mutual help and so on. In other words, it has trained them to become better citizens and made better men out of them.

Experience, has made me very sceptic. With regard to point (a), I believe that, more often than not, money has been lent to men who were already fairly well-off but whose greed to purchase more lands could not be satisfied. The price of land in this part of the country varies, from Rs 400/- to Rs 500/- per kani or 1.5 acres. The rate of interest to be paid on this borrowing was fixed by the Societies at Rs 16/-% per annum. Thus each kani of land was purchased at an annually accruing interest of Rs 64/- plus the principal. Now, if the rent and cost of cultivation are excluded, one kani of land does not produce enough to meet the charge of interest on its capital value at this rate and thus it was initially impossible for any debtor to clear up the principal. Several experts of the Co-operative movement in Bengal tell me that this was a well-thought-out course. By leaving a big margin of profit usually  $3\frac{1}{2}\%$  in the hands of the rural Societies they piously intended to make the Society independent of outside credit and thus self-sufficient. Besides, they say, and I do not dispute that

---

the prevailing rates of the moneylender in the locality were much higher than this and so this was a real relief. I have already said that it was inherently impossible for the debtor to clear up his principal. The only thing that could happen was, and that subject to the debtor paying all that he could get out of the land regularly without consideration of good or bad year, that the society in about 30 years' time could become independent of the out-side creditor but without having a penny in hand. The position of the original debtor, however, would have remained unchanged. But a few percent less would have brought the demand within his paying capacity and would have made all the difference to him.

With regard to the moneylender's rates, it may be said that though the rates are high, the cultivator has his own way of dealing with them too. Often he flouts the demands and succeeds in remaining where he was, inspite of all the civil court decrees. When cornered beyond any chance of escape, he transfers his rights and gets a relief by becoming a tenant or under-tenant and so on. In other cases the moneylender merely comes and goes. Legally it may sound bad, but it, nevertheless, remains a fact.

The Co-operative debtor, however, cannot afford to do this. He has to face a well-run machinery privileged with authority and armed with summary powers. His peace lies in resignation to pay on and on, year in and year out and go on without a murmur believing that he

is much better off than he would have been otherwise. The least that I can say is that the movement was ill-planned and ill-administered.

With regard to (b), not being in possession of facts and figures I prefer to leave the matter to speculation. I would have been, however, happier to see the co-operators less indebted than what they are or at least less than those others who are not co-operators. Besides, as I have said before, I am not quite sure if the co-operators are not indebted to other creditors over and above that to the rural societies, more or less to the same extent as the other average individuals are. But with regard to (c) I am quite positive that Co-operative movement has done nothing of the sort. Apart from the fact that there are altogether only about 4000 members which roughly gives 1/2% of the total population which means that the movement does not touch more than a fringe of the problem, even the 400 members have learnt nothing, saved nothing, and got nothing out of the so-called Co-operative movement. The word Co-operation has no other significance to them than that it is a kind of moneylending system, in which the so-called low rates of interest prevail. No body seems to have bothered very much to give them even the minimum of the advantages and benefits of real co-operative organisation. In my opinion, sirs, the movement has been a hopeless failure here and has done no good, whatsoever to any

---

one except perhaps to few financiers and creditors who have found a profitable and safe source of investment in the so called Co-operative Banks. Not a single old debtor to my knowledge, has been able to become, through Co-operation, the present or the future depositor of the parent Society. A lot is made of economic depression and so on, and though I do not deny their influences, it seems to me that the whole thing has been a mere form, a blind imitation of a western pattern without the requisite atmosphere or foundation and thus inherently rotten and doomed to failure.

“Can anything be done now?” is naturally the next question. Let us first of all understand what is Co-operation proper. We co-operate or voluntarily unite ourselves into groups on terms of equality for the development of our economic resources and with the object of protecting ourselves and other members from the clutches of profiting moneylenders or business men. This implies, amongst other things, a dominating sense of mutual help and protection amongst the members, brotherhood irrespective of caste and creed and a community of interest.

“The object is to organise and associate together in the best interest of the economic welfare of the members, to put small bits of resources together in order to lend to enterprising ones at low rates for their economic and productive activities and to develop amongst the

---

members the habits of economy, frugality, reliance, sacrifice and joint effort, for common cause, to acquire self-sufficiency and independence in credit as far as the ordinary requirement of the members would demand and to arrange joint production, joint marketing and purchasing where advantageous and practicable. To these can be added many more, e. g., educational provision for the children of the members, arrangements for employment of doctors and other experts for the common and mutual benefit and so on.

Now I ask you, gentlemen, if you are aware of or have ever striven in the whole life history of the Co-operative movement in your Sub-division for any of these objects? As far as I know, I am afraid, I have to pronounce a most emphatic "No". The only thing you have been doing is either to lend and receive annual interest in a care-free way or to pay for the debt you have incurred. That is all. It is, however, never too late to mend or to take a good turn. It is open to you to provide and create all that is essential for the movement's growth, the requisite atmosphere, the necessary foundation and the association of the right type of men to work it up. The movement in our country has not been a development from within but an imposition from without, and therefore, its needs and requirements should be carefully studied and watched as they arise. They will be different from those prevailing in other countries.

## SUGGESTIONS.

“Let those from amongst you whose interests are involved and those who may be actuated by a desire of service to their fellow beings and those who, though not directly concerned, may be privileged to know the rudiments of co-operation and are gifted with a certain amount of imagination and initiative, come forward and form a “Co-operative Welfare and Propaganda Association” and let this association, created exclusively for the purpose, take up the work of propagating co-operative ideals which should have been done long ago by the C. C. Bank itself. Let the Association draw up a programme of work, of meetings, lectures and shows and of using pamphlets and handbills and of carrying on the propaganda continuously and incessantly. Year in and year out, go on hammering it in, undaunted and determined, true to your object and never to stop until the object, the requisite atmosphere for your movement had been achieved”.

“To make your propaganda effective, you have to make the movement attractive and useful to the co-operators or would be co-operators. It is your business to see to the improvement of their economic condition and resources and take up schemes which they cannot afford individually. They are agriculturists primarily and yours is a paddy-growing district; but I can assure you, on

the strength of my experience and experiments, that the land is capable of producing almost every thing you can wish. Tobacco, ground-nuts, sugarcane, gram, mustard, til, vegetables and what not, every thing can grow and grow well. If a cultivator takes up these crops for which he has both leisure and opportunities in addition to his paddy, his income can easily be increased by 25%. What he wants is persuasion, expert advice and guidance, and in early stage, loan in the form of seeds, and these the movement should supply.

It is, therefore, indispensable that the Supervisors be trained and converted into well-trained expert agricultural demonstrators also. This work along with other duties should be made part and parcel of their normal functions and they should be rewarded for good work and punished for neglect.

All this is not only possible but easy to manage. There is no reason why from next year no supervisor, either permanent or temporary, be retained in service until he has qualified himself fully both for Co-operative work as well as for Agriculture. At best, they will require study leave at half pay for some months and this the C. C. Bank can certainly afford to pay.

Thus you will obtain, free of much additional cost, services of 6 to 8 officers of the C. C. Bank for the propagation of Co-operation ideals and for the development of Agriculture by improved methods and new crops.



The rate of interest, charged by the C. C. Bank and by the rural societies in their turn, are excessive and far high to be co-operative in any sense. In fact, as I pointed out above, they leave no margin for paying more than the interest demand only and tend to reduce the debtor to a state of lifelong bondage. This must stop. The maximum rate should be 8% in the case of C. C. Bank. and 10% in the case of the Society members. Without this the co-operative movement will cease to be of any attraction or permanent value. Particularly so, when the legislature has already passed the Bengal Agricultural Debtors Bill. and though provision has been made therein for the exclusion of Co-operative debts from the scope of the bill, it is bound to react on the whole movement, and there is no reason why it should not. As I have already said more than once, 16% per annum is an intolerable rate. The unfortunate debtor who has this rate of interest on his neck will never become solvent in his life and for him the movement will only be a different name of the exacting moneylender. The rates must be reduced as suggested (My views have since changed; 4% from the societies and 5% from the members is the maximum that can possibly be paid by them).

“ The development of the habit of frugality and putting by a little for the rainy day is another important function of the Co-operative movement. The members of the rural Societies should be persuaded, appealed to and,

if necessary, coerced, as long as they retain memberships, to put by a certain amount every year. Loans are supposed to be advanced to cover only  $1/2$  of total financial capacity of the individual member concerned and he can, in his own interest, be made to deposit, say, an amount equal to 3% of his liability. This will be a compulsory saving demanded over and above the society's dues and thus when the rent is cleared, he will find himself the master of a small fortune.

"The Bank should immediately proceed with a programme of forming new Societies. At least another 164 should be formed bringing up the total to 300. This programme may be spread over a period of 5 years. I consider this step absolutely necessary and strongly advise you to take it. If the movement is going to be really effective, this should be considered absolutely the minimum. The object should be not merely the removal of rural indebtedness but also the raising, in every locality, of groups of individuals who will serve as examples and guides to others. The membership will have to vary according to circumstances, but should never be much greater than 24 in any case.

"No money should be lent to any individual unless and until majority of the members are satisfied that the debt is being incurred for the redemption of heavy interest, loan or for an unavoidable and emergent liability

or for making such improvement in the method of production as would justify the expenditure.

“Further, I want to suggest that just as the depositors have agreed to pay the compulsory -/1/- per rupee interest for the purpose of technical education, so should the members of rural societies subscribe or concede -/8/- a year to be deducted as a compulsory tax from payments made to their societies. This will bring about 2000/- a year and may be called the “Rural Societies Education Fund”. Out of this, repayable scholarships of varying amounts and terms should be given to the children of the members of the rural Societies and their award may be decided upon either in a properly convened meeting of the representatives of the societies, or by the Welfare and Co-operative Propaganda Association.

“Lastly, let me suggest that the Co-operators should be given medical help at half the usual cost. That is to say, some reliable medical practitioners should be chosen to attend to the health of the members, when called to do so, who will be entitled to accept only half their rates of fees from the members. The other half or one third according to arrangements should be met out of the profits of the Co-operative Bank. This will serve as an additional attraction and will be in the best interest both of the co-operators as well as the movement. I am sure, many doctors will be willing to accept reduced rates of fees on a monopoly basis.

"In conclusion, let me tell you, gentlemen, that your Sub-division is exceptionally fertile both in men and brains; but alas, ignorance reigns supreme over you. Lack of activity and co-ordination of resources are your short-comings. And Co-operation will show the way and give the necessary stimulus and orientation to your activities. Wake up and learn the habit of putting your minds and resources together and work with singleness of purpose for a joint cause; if you do, the future will be yours.

Remember, gentlemen, your wealth does not depend upon your resources, but upon your men and their vitality, energy, and initiative and it is this that you should develop and strive for by Co-operation."

The above extracts contain my analysis of of the Co-operative movement.

I have only to add a few words in respect of the rate of interest proposed two years ago. The C. C. Bank of Patuakhali was placed entirely and exclusively under my personal supervision with the result that collection rose to about 3 times that in the year preceding. The defunct Land Mortgage Bank was saved from virtual collapse and I found that my own work had put me in an unenviable position and I could no more ask the depositors to reduce the rate of interest to the extent I would have liked them to. The experience and reasoning have, however, proved beyond dispute, as briefly

mentioned in the preceding chapter, that any thing above 5% interest will be quite beyond the capacity of the agriculturist to pay and that if the Co-operative Bank cannot offer credit to the peasantry at this rate, they may as well be closed down. In any case it could be sheer misnomer to call them co-operative. They do not try to help the peasantry to become solvent at any stage of their life; on the contrary, they tried to widen the scope of the Creditors' power to purchase life-long serfdom of the debtors under a better organised and more powerful system. In fact, the difference between Co-operative Bank and the Mahajan is only a matter of degree and it is really disputable which one of the two is preferable to the peasantry.

The department will, of course, never admit that the movement has been placed on inherently false calculation. One patent argument has always been discussed in the extracts quoted above. The other is "Yes, very good the lesser the interest, the better;" but the mistake has been committed and now how are we to meet the demand of the depositors of the Provincial Co-operative Bank who threaten to withdraw their deposits if the rate is reduced? How to face this danger of a collapse? I believe in "where there is a will there is a way". If the moribund bank depositors could reduce their rates of interest from 8% to 3 or 4%, I see no reason why the Provincial Bank depositors could not be persuaded to

---

follow suit. What could they do if the mofassil banks stopped payment and the Provincial Bank had collapsed ? Shrewd financiers know well enough that it is better to forego part of the profit if the capital itself is in danger. They also know when to resist and when to give way. They know well enough that civil suits and cases could not go very far to help them. Apart from this, the economic depression of the last few years had made capital so cheap that the department with the help of the State could easily find as much loan as it wanted at 3% to meet the threatened demand. A long term loan could have been floated with provision to convert Provincial Bank deposits into the new loan and it would have been found that in actual practice very few depositors would have insisted on withdrawing their deposits. The prestige of the B. P. Bank would have been enhanced, the co-operators saved from financial ruin, and the movement regenerated and revitalised. All this may look like a dream. It is nevertheless a practical proposition for those who believe that man is more powerful than circumstances.

However, it is no use crying over the past, the point to see is, **can anything be done now ?**

Happily the Bengal Provincial Co-operative Bank has recently reduced its rate of interest to 5%. This is saddled with half a dozen conditions which it is difficult to comply with and the result is that in actual practice no mofassil Bank can take the risk of reducing

---

its rate of interest substantially. But even if these conditions are withdrawn, it is at least  $1\frac{1}{2}\%$  too high. The first thing to do, therefore, is to reduce the rate to  $3\frac{1}{2}\%$  and insist that no Co-operative Bank will charge more than 4% on loans to the Rural Societies. The Rural Societies, in their turn, should keep their rate at 5% and not more.

In the pages that have preceded, I have clearly shown that the theory of a big margin of reserves in the hands of the Rural Societies was based on misunderstanding and false notions about the productivity of the soil. In fact I doubt if this factor was at all taken into account. I am more inclined to think that the early organisers were more or less exclusively guided by the prevailing rates of interest charged by the money-lenders. They thought they were providing really cheap credit, which was not the case. It was certainly very much cheaper than that offered by the money-lender, but the difference was only a matter of degree and not substantial enough to lead to solvency. The result obtained will bear out my views. The number of independent societies will hardly be more than a fraction of the total set up, and even these societies have failed to build any actual cash reserve. If at all, it exists on paper only and is a doubtful quantity.

The next thing to do is to call a **Moratorium** to arrear interest that accrued according to the old rates of interest.

---

The creditors have enjoyed enough of the high rates of profit which the debtor has paid for years and years and under most pressing circumstances and in terms of his life-blood. If they cannot accomodate him even now, they can hardly distinguish themselves from the exacting money-lender, and I am confident they would. All the mofassil depositors have agreed to 3% or 4% and the Provincial Bank depositors cannot be very much different. If they insist, the state should come to the rescue. The Agricultural Debtors Act should apply. It will not be a breach of promise. It will only mean compliance with the new ethics that has dawned on the nation,—the ethics of greatest good to the greatest number,—the ethics of performing the supreme national duty of relieving the peasantry of its life-long serfdom.

In this connection I cannot help observing that the position of co-operative debts is rather anomalous in relation to the Agricultural Debtors Act. The condition of taking permission of the Registrar or Assistant Registrar before the award is made, is a perfect nuisance and will only lead to enormous amount of delay and wastage of energy in unnecessary correspondence. Besides, the Co-operative Bank staff itself is soon going to find itself in a mess, when half a dozen D. S. Boards, sitting simultaneously in different Unions, will notice them to appear. And the assets will fluctuate daily and with so much uncertainty that the Banks will need a new system of mathematics to cope with the situation. Over and above this, I am afraid, a deadlock is inevitable in the collection of dues as soon as debt settlement becomes more popular.

The obvious and proper course, therefore, would be to write off completely and at once all the arrear interest and reduce the current interest to 5% in the case of



---

Society members. The Registrar can then legitimately insist that except in insolvency cases the principal will not be reduced and that after deductions for rent, cost of cultivation and living have been made from the debtor's income, the co-operative debt will have the first charge in preference to all other debts.

But clearly this cannot complete the whole story. The main function of the Co-operative Bank is still to be stated. The Banks have ceased to advance money and they cannot continue this policy any longer, if the peasantry is to be saved from relapsing into old order. The Banks must multiply and advance money where necessary. There should be one Bank for every Thana of 8 to 9 Unions. A lac of rupees from the Bengal Provincial Bank at  $3\frac{1}{2}\%$  plus local deposits at, say  $3\%$  and—I am sure there will be no dearth of local deposits in due course,—should be a fair capital to start with. One Government officer of the department,—to work as Inspector as well as Auditor, one Supervisor and one clerk at Rs. 25/- p.m. each and one peon should suffice for these Thana Banks. The cash should be kept in a safe embedded in the Thana premises for safe custody. The Bank Office should stand in the centre of an Agricultural Farm. All these men should be well-up in the principles of Co-operation and must invariably have had first class practical training in Agriculture. They must also be able to take charge of the development of cottage industries, items about which more will be said hereafter. For the present, suffice it to say that the Bank should run as living institutions and the staff must develop a personal touch with the villagers. The Bank should advance loan to them only when they really need it and should see if it can be repaid. The Bank should

---

gradually buy off, at a profit all such old debts of the cultivator as he would be liable to pay to other money-lenders in 15 or 20 instalments fixed under a debt settlement award. The latter, I am sure, will thank their stars if they can sell off those assets to the Bank even at  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the capitalised value of the instalments provided they are saved the uncertainty and botheration of waiting for 20 years to recover their dues in small fragments of a risky and doubtful nature. One third of this capitalised value should be paid to them in cash if they like and two-thirds kept as deposit in the Bank for sometime. This fraction of actual cash payment and the additional safety of the rest will make the bargain attractive for them and they will jump at it. The Bank can lighten the burden of the peasantry still further by reducing, say, another 50% of the awarded amount, thus scaling down the total debt by 75% assuming that the awards are rightly made and fixed at not more than 50% of the total original debt. The peasantry will then have only one creditor, the Bank, to deal with, which would at least partially be a state concern and thus in a position to accommodate them when necessary. The money-lender will go completely out of the picture and so far as he is concerned the debt would really have been reduced to  $16\frac{1}{2}\%$ . This is incidentally the solution of the great problem of the colossal indebtedness of Indian peasantry that I have to offer. I may be guilty of being dogmatic, but I will bow down to any one who can suggest anything better and more practical without disturbing the existing social order.

But even all this will not do. We must increase the productive power of the cultivator. This is the problem of all problems which I propose to deal with in the next two chapters.

## CHAPTER IV.

### 'Agriculture.

I have been in touch with Agriculture for some years and a few paragraphs from my address delivered in October, 1937, will be interesting as an introduction.

"It need hardly be questioned that Agriculture is and will remain the back-bone of the economic system of our country and any scheme of economic prosperity must be based, first and foremost, on the improvement of this industry. Agriculture must, therefore, occupy the first place of importance in our programme and should get the very best attention we can pay.

Strange as it may appear, it is nevertheless a fact, an irony of fate, that India, inspite of being predominantly agriculturist, remains notoriously backward and old-fashioned in the field of agricultural development and in the invention of new and improved methods of Agriculture. The same old plough, hardly cutting 3 inches deep, the same pair of half-starved and rickety bullocks and in Bengal even cows, still provide the only means of tilling the land, the same primitive system of sowing and the same ancient method of reaping and thrashing, reminiscent of the Stone Age

---

still continue, as if India with all her philosophy and culture, was incapable of thinking and evolving anything better or that her Aryan rulers and thinkers so proud of their lofty imagination, could never spare a moment's thought on the vast humanity engaged in the low pursuit of tilling the soil. Worst of all, the Indian cultivator, true to his national tradition, still refuses to admit that his art is imperfect and that he does not know enough about it.

However, these are only some of those indispensable commonplaces that cannot be helped. We have heard them before and know very nearly all that has to be done. The cultivator will not pay any heed to our easy-chair deliberations nor to our platform speeches. He wants sympathetic guidance and training by demonstration. The problem is how to proceed and how to finance and give effect to our pious wishes.

A word of caution. It has been customary for our countrymen to look to the State for everything that is to be done. We seem to think that the coffers of the State are inexhaustible. I have observed elsewhere and repeat again that this is a very false notion. We forget that the resources of the State are limited and that the primary duty of the State is to maintain law and order and provide for the administration of justice. But even if we take a more modern view and say that the State must concern itself and be held responsible

---

for providing for general economic prosperity of all her people, it is a sheer impossibility for any State in the world to meet the one hundred and one special and local needs of her constituents at one or within a short time. The State must play its part, but it will take years before it can provide every locality with all that it may need. We must, therefore, help ourselves and stand on our own legs to march on and keep pace with a progressive world."

What is the solution and what are the practical steps to be taken—is the problem. There can be hardly two opinions on the point that the first requirement of Agriculture is Demonstration Farms—not one in each District as at present, where, with the exception of few District Officials or superior Officers of the Department, few cultivators ever get a chance to go, but one in each union without exception. No doubt the general level of Bengal is rather low and this creates additional difficulties. Also true that jute and paddy will remain the staple crops and cover the major portion of the land during the rains. But it is also a fact that during the cold weather a variety of new and highly paying crops, e. g., sugarcane, ground nut, castor oil and other seeds, potato, chillies, turmeric, ginger, and most of the English vegetables can grow splendidly all over the province.

Orchards deserve special mention and extensive development. Mangoes will do well in a number of districts if they are properly cultivated. This crop has

---

tremendous potentialities. It will have a market not only in India but, may be, all over the world. Lemon and bananas are other important fruits which can have a bright future and a world market. Bengal soil is eminently suitable for their luxuriant growth and Bengal should be able to supply enormous quantities. These must be developed in the Demonstration Farm in the Union, and the peasantry convinced of the profit they can yield. In the early stages, grafts and plants will have to be imported at some cost, but in the course of 4-5 years, each farm should be able to serve as a nursery, not only for improved seeds of paddy and jute but also of the various orchards proposed to be developed. The cultivators will never be slow to pick up anything that will pay.

Coming now to the question of how this idea can be worked out in actual practice, I can say from personal experience both at Patuakhali and at Sirajganj that it is not difficult to obtain blocks of 7 to 8 acres of suitable land in almost every Union without exception and any one who doubts is welcome to see the farms opened in Sirajganj under the Rural Development Scheme. The R. D. Council of Sirajganj engaged 3 demonstrators each of whom was placed in charge of 8 or 9 farms situated within a circle of 5 to 6 miles radius. More could be started, but it was decided not to extend the scheme all at once, primarily because the demand

---

on my time and energy was becoming a little too heavy. The initial difficulties were, of course, many. In some cases the cultivator thought that the Government would make the land Khas and had to be persuaded out of his false notions. The demonstrators did not know what to do, what to grow and when to grow. The department of Agriculture, inspite of the best efforts of the District Agricultural Officer, was slow to get out of its red-tape and "Sanction." The seeds which the department kindly supplied came rather late and were not always of the best and dependable quality. Inspite of all this the experiment has been anything but a failure.

Labour and cattle were provided by the farmers. Improved seeds of jute and paddy and of many other new crops such as, Joar, Maize, Oil-seed, Fodder crop, were supplied partly by the Department and partly by the R. D. Council. In the next cold weather, **robi** crops, will be tried and a beginning made with fruit and orchards.

I have often been asked—how did you get the funds? My reply is that given necessary imagination and will, funds should never stand in the way of progress. In the course of two years and a quarter at Patuakhali it was possible for me to get 60 or 70 tanks excavated, a dozen and a half beautiful schools, and half a dozen dispensaries set up, and with the exception of some grant from the Govt. of India for this last item, -a fraction of the whole expense, the rest was raised

---

through the local bodies and from the local people. In Sirajganj, also, so far I have had no difficulty, nor do I expect any. The D. B. have contributed, the Co-operative Bank can contribute and the Union Boards are willing to contribute, if desired. In fact, the U. Boards of Sirajganj have budgetted Rs. 2000/- for Agricultural development in the current year and did the same last year though I did not feel the necessity of asking them to pay anything.

To be more exact, the proper source to tap for the funds required is the D. B., and if at all necessary, the Union Board. If each District Board spends a sum of Rs. 5000/- to 10000/- in the year on Agricultural Development, I for one, will never agree that it will be improper. But we must know and observe economy. The demonstrators will have very little work to do, after the crops have been grown. For about six months their service would be wasted and this is to be avoided if we can claim to know the meaning of economy. Unfortunately this is lost sight of and few people realise the wastage of time and energy which is happening in many services under the bogey of "Specialisation" "departmental man" and "efficiency."

I do not, however, propose to pursue this subject here. I will come to it later in a separate chapter. For the present, I suggest that one or more Supervisors of the Co-operative Bank should be men who are



---

also fully qualified Agricultural Demonstrators. The period of collection of Bank dues will correspond with the period of harvesting when there will be little work to do in the Agricultural Farms and similarly the season of cultivation and sowing will correspond with the period when there will be nothing to collect. The Supervisor will, therefore, be able to look both to collection and Agricultural Farms. The system should work splendidly and I cannot really think of a more satisfactory and more economical arrangement to meet the situation. I propose to give it a trial at Sirajganj and I am confident it will be a success as it ought to.

As to the departmental Demonstrators, they can either be withdrawn or their services transferred to the Co-operative Bank. It is a waste of money to employ them for the little work they do now. The savings, effected and the grants made by the D. B., should go to the execution of the programme already chalked out. One District Agricultural Farm may continue and the District Agricultural Officer made responsible for the Agricultural development work of the Co-operative Bank. If there be one Bank at each Thana, as suggested in the previous chapter, the arrangement would need little to be added.

A word about the Thana Farms. The Farm at the Thana headquarters should be run on lines slightly different from those in the Unions. The land for

---

the Thana Farms, may be either acquired or taken lease of. The landlords can and should help. These farms should be run under the direct supervision of the departmental-Auditor Inspector who should possess necessary qualification—not that of a research Scholar, but, say, passed in one year's course in practical Agriculture and horticulture. The clerk and Supervisor under him should likewise possess similar qualification,—Three months' practical training in a District Farm.

These farms must run as a paying concern and they should, as there will be little overhead charges. They must serve as nurseries both for improved and new seeds and after a few years for grafts and fruit plants. The staff will still have heaps of times to look to other needs to which I will come later.

Second in importance is the need of improving the notoriously impoverished cattle breed of the province. Indian Agriculture is very much dependent upon cattle. Without a good pair of bullocks a heavy and deep-cutting plough cannot be used and the soil cannot be tilled to its best advantage. This problem has to be attacked seriously.

Thanks to the splendid lead that His Excellency the present Viceroy has taken in this direction, the matter is engaging due attention and I do really think that this move of His Excellency's will go down as an

---

epoch-making event in the History of Indian peasants' prosperity.

To begin with—Stud bulls have to be provided, at least one or two, in every Thana. Later on, selected cross breeds should be provided for every Union and new blood imported every year.

The difficulties of maintaining these Stud bulls in good health will be a problem in the early stages. Last year I imported ten bulls from Rohtok and obtained two of the same breed from other places. My experience is that it is really a very tough question to keep them in good health without incurring considerable maintenance cost. The live stock expert of Bengal insisted that they should be given over to selected cultivators to be maintained by them free of all charges and that the keeper should be allowed to charge -/8/- for each service and thus recover maintenance cost. I yielded under protest and have learnt with grief that it was a blunder to accept this advice. The health of several bulls deteriorated rapidly in spite of our best efforts, simply because the bulls were not properly fed and looked after. Bengal peasants treat their cattle as a necessary evil and feed them only on paddy straw. During the rainy season the land goes under water and the bull has to stand tied in the cow-shed. The other cattle have some work, but he has none and no body to see to his feed, bath and exercise. I maintain with due respect to the experts

---

that at least in the early stages until cattle sense develops, maintenance of Stud bulls will require expense. A part time servant will be necessary and the bulls will have to be fed on something more in addition to paddy straw. When Co-operative Banks are opened in each Thana, one or two bulls should be kept in these Agricultural Farms. But until this is done, maintenance of bulls will present a problem. Perhaps the Chaukider and particularly those of D. B. Dak Bungalows, where available, may be of some assistance.

So much about the Stud bulls, but what about the rest of the cattle which, more or less, starve. The system of taking herds out for grazing in open fields is almost unknown in most Districts even during the dry months and there are reasons for it

The pressure on the soil of Bengal has become really very heavy. Not an inch of dry land is left uncultivated and grazing grounds and pasture lands are completely non-existent. Where are the cattle to graze and what are they to graze? The position has become untenable if the cattle breed of Bengal is to be improved. What is to be done?

Surely when the Permanent Settlement was made, all the land included in a Zamindari or Taluk was not culturable to the same extent as it is now. Hundreds of Beels and marshy lands have since dried up and very little enhancement of revenue has been made on that

---

score. The process still continues in many places and if the State can intervene, as in my opinion it ought, something can be done. All Beels and marshy lands that are gradually drying up can be made Khas and reserved exclusively for pastures. In fact, it will be no hardship if retrospective effect for the last 20 years is given to this proposal. There will certainly be difficulties. Tenants have been settled and cannot be ejected. But special circumstances will require special treatment. Hundreds of holdings are sold for non-payment of rents and exchange of holdings can be made. Time may be allowed and a definite period fixed. Special legislation may be enacted, and option given to surrender other lands in exchange, if dried Beels cannot be spared. In any case, if the problem is to be solved something will have to be done and difficulties faced. It is, by no means, too much to say that every village should have 2% of the culturable land reserved for pastures and it should be made obligatory on the landlord or landlords to provide these pasture lands in the course of 3 years. Cattle play an important part in rural economics and deserve proper treatment. They must get some place to graze. If the grazing ground is free, as it ought to be, well and good; but even if the cattle-owners are forced to pay a small grazing ground cess, say a pie for a rupee of rent, it would pay them in the long run.

A word about the size of holdings before I close this Chapter. The size of average holdings in Bengal

---

is extremely small and leads to a terrible wastage of energy and time in cultivation. No improvement can be effected until the holdings are enlarged to a paying size. Besides, the present average size of the holding is a potential danger and tends to create a very unfortunate class of people who are neither agriculturists nor non-agriculturists. The small holdings prevent them from following other pursuits whole-heartedly and they can neither depend upon agriculture alone nor give it up and do something else. Amicable consolidation of holding, as has been done in the Punjab, does not seem to be a practical proposition in Bengal. The land tenure system is too complicated to allow this. Unfortunately the position is going to be worse very soon. The Agricultural Debts Act is going to break the already small holdings into still smaller fragments. Sec. 22 of the Act, in particular, seems to have fixed the size of a holding definitely at 3 Bighas which is about one acre only. I submit with respect to the framers of the Act that though it is a saving clause,—something better than nothing,—it does not really save enough to be of much help. One acre can hardly yield more than Rs. 50/- to 60/- in the year and will create a class which will be neither agriculturist nor non-agriculturist. These people will never be happy. So, if we want to build a better future, let us at least attempt to build a good one. The minimum holding, which would yield enough to sustain a family of four, should measure at least 5

---

Bighas which would give an income of about Rs. 100/- a year and that will mean only Rs. 2/- per person per month. This holding should be protected against all debts and against further fragmentation. The Law of Registration can perhaps help in stopping the progress of undue fragmentation of holding. The scale of fees can be regulated to deter fragmentation beyond a minimum size. Details may appear complicated, but can, nevertheless, be worked out after consideration, of all the issues involved.

This proposal will, of course, increase the number of the landless. An altogether landless class will, I think, be happier than one who is neither the one nor the other.

---

## CHAPTER V.

### Cottage Industries.

My experience of cottage industries is rather of recent date. It was only last year at Sirajganj that I seriously applied myself to the study of this important problem. The object and reason and the findings have been set forth in my address on the subject from which I will quote where necessary. Expansion of cottage industries is an indispensable necessity and I firmly believe that rural economics cannot possibly be built up without taking account of this potential item.

Obviously, the most important of the group is **weaving**. Food and cloth are the two primary needs of civilized life. Every man and woman requires cloth after hunger has been satisfied. Every cultivator has to spend about two rupees at least per person per annum for clothing and this is not a small demand. It can provide employment for hundreds and thousands of the landless as well as the Bhadraklok unemployed, if they shake off the idea that there is anything inherently derogatory in taking up a loom and earn Rs. 20/- p. m. working inside their homes. I do not deny that it is



---

difficult to fight against such deep-rooted social prejudices but they will go. Difficulties of finding suitable markets raise further complications but they also admit of satisfactory solutions.

A great stumbling-block, however, is the competition with mill-woven and foreign-made cloth. This is entirely a problem for the State to tackle. Indian mills are capitalistic institutions, owned and financed by a few financiers. They produce or try to produce cloth according to the same line of business management as do the foreign mills. But while the foreign mills have to pay sea-freight on their exported goods to India, the home mills have to pay none. The Indian mills, therefore, do not deserve, at any rate, as far as I can see, any treatment in preference to the foreign ones. They have in their favour the margin of sea-freight and such export duty as foreign mills may be paying to their Home Governments and this should be enough to make up for their lack of experience and efficiency. To be clear, I see little justification for a policy of protection in the case of Indian Mills. They should, in my opinion, pay the same home duty as the foreign mills pay import duty. True, they employ home labour; but that is so small a fraction of the total population, a few million workers, that it hardly deserves any serious consideration. As to Indian capital, it does not interest the peasant and the villager, and it is he who is a problem to-day and not the few mill-owners and capitalists.

In any case, there is no intention to close down the mills. All that is desired is to recover from them what they do not deserve—recover for the State—the property of the mill-owners, the capitalists, as well as that of the peasant and leave them free to compete with foreign mills. That is the way efficiency is developed.

The cultivator and the villagers, who form bulk of the population of the province, require cloth as cheap as possible. High duties on goods they use will, of course, mean more burden on their impoverished purse. But if this high duty can revive home production of the particular goods they use by developing handloom industry, they do not stand to lose in the long run. Much of it will remain in the village and will go to their own kith and kin. Handloom-woven cloth is not likely to be exported in considerable quantities, and the net result would be a gain to the State from the shares of the mill-owners, both foreign and home. The State is theirs, be it this or that Government, and any addition to the income of the State, howsoever small it may be, is income to the villagers, to the home-mill-owners, to the capitalists and to every body else in the country.

As to other cottage industries, none else stands comparison with weaving. **Jute-weaving** comes a good second, followed by **coir** industry in some districts as a third. Both will have at a least a good local market and deserve to be developed. **Poultry** has good scope

---

and there are both home and foreign demands for it. Tanning is unlikely to be a success, as a cottage industry, but it can be developed in a few suitable centres. The raw material is abundant all over the province.

As to the rest like carpentry, smithy, basket-making, umbrella-handle-making, cutlery etc., they are good only for the fancy to please. They will neither have a market nor pay. The fate of shoe-making, the only other industry, capable of expansion as a cottage industry, has been sealed for good by cheap foreign goods and it will be useless to waste money over it or fight against great odds and deprive the villager of the rare luxury of purchasing cheap shoe.

The problem of weaving has been tackled by me at Sirajganj in practical forms, and as the requirements of the next important cottage industry of jute-weaving will be the same, I quote below extracts from my address on the subject which will indicate how an attempt to meet the situation can be made.

Let me take up the question of supplementing agricultural income by means of other cottage industries, a step which must be taken up immediately and in right earnest. The replies to the questionnaire, issued on the subject, disclose a great diversity of opinion. To mention a few, some have suggested basket and mat-making others have suggested smithy, carpentry, jute-weaving and so on. Only **cloth-weaving** is common to all sugges-

---

tions. I must, therefore, content myself with what seems to me the best and surest, and that is **weaving only** which I consider to be highly useful for the economic betterment of the subdivision as a whole.

The competition with foreign and mill-woven cloth is and will continue to remain very acute; but I think there is still sufficient market for hand-woven cloth and this market is not likely to shrink in the near future. On the contrary, the general trend of events in the world as well as in India, induces me to think that the future of the individual artisan and craftsman is definitely brightening up. Moreover, I want the expansion of this cottage industry primarily as a supplement to agriculture and not as the only or the main industry. I wish to see weaving taken up by every cultivator including Jotedars and Talukders in their spare moments during the busy season, and for whole time during the periods they have practically no work to do. Besides, it will provide occupation for their inmates, and many poor and infirm and otherwise useless people would find in it a suitable source of earning.

The main point is how to work up and finance the scheme. At present there is a certain amount of antipathy towards weaving amongst the "Grihasto" cultivators and "Bhodraloks". They consider it below their dignity to take up the weavers' job. This must go and I think it will. In these hard days of economic struggle,

---

such whimsical notions, once we set our minds to break through them, will not last long.

The more difficult and serious problem, however, is the question of giving necessary training. For this we have to open schools and training camps and this needs funds. Besides, what shapes these schools should take, is another question which needs examination.

I think weaving schools, pure and simple, will not go very far. It is difficult to finance them and still more difficult to run these with permanent results. A large percentage of the pupils, partly due to lack of funds and partly due to lack of necessary atmosphere, never utilise their training which goes waste.

To avoid this wastage and to create the requisite atmosphere of a living business and industry, these schools should be combined with a weaving business. In other words, each school should be combined with a weaving factory department. To speak frankly, my views on this point are mostly based on the successful working of the **Shahzadpur and Enayetpur factory schools**. They furnish very good model to adopt all over Bengal.

But it is difficult to find men willing to finance these factories, and even if we do, we run the risk of passing entire control to one single individual which may or may not suit public temperament and future developments. Supposing we choose the alternative of

---

finding a factory on co-operative basis. 'Here we have to face the stern problem of lack of interest and leadership which self-interest alone can create and the lack of which has been the most powerful and impregnable argument against co-operative business and the chief cause of failure of most of the co-operative business efforts. We must therefore, find a **via media**. Experts tell me that such factories, to be started on a modest but workable scale, will require Rs 2000/ or near about. Rs 700/ will be required for the construction of building and other necessary equipments for dyeing etc. Rs 400 for purchase of looms to be leased out to workers on hire-purchase system. Rs 500 for purchase of yarns and about Rs 400 to be kept as fluid resource with which to purchase the finished product and carry on business. Let this sum of Rs 2000/- be broken into at least 15 shares of Rs 100 each and one share of Rs 500. Let the share-holders elect a Managing Committee consisting of the C. O. and the S. D. O., whose main business would be to audit the accounts every now and then and guide the committee where necessary. Let the capital-shareholder who, should be a man, possessed of capacity and business sense, be appointed Superintendent of the factory and get, over and above his proportionate share-profit, a further commission of 25% of the total profits made by the factory department as cost of supervision. The weaving school department should be run by a trained teacher

---

who should get a monthly pay, say of Rs. 15-1-30 plus 10% of the total profits made by the factory department. This will keep him interested in the business side of the work and would be his legitimate remuneration for the services he would render to the factory department.

The factory department should reserve another 10% for the school department as the legitimate share of the school section which will train up the workers of the factory department. Let the balance of 55% after necessary deductions for reserve fund and sinking fund have been made, be proportionately distributed on the shareholders.

The school section will require a sum of Rs. 700 for capital expenditure. It should not be difficult to raise this fund in the following way :—

(a) Rs 100 per school to be contributed by the Central Co-operative Bank concerned.

(b) Rs 50 to be contributed by the Union Board where the school will be located.

(c) Rs 25 each to be contributed by the 2 adjoining Union Boards.

(d) Rs 300 to be borrowed from the Department of Industry.

(e) The rest to be raised by local subscription.

As regards the recurring expense which would be about Rs 30 p. m., the department of industries should

---

be approached for a monthly grant of Rs 15 p. m. for each school. The balance of Rs. 15 should be contributed by the District Board.

No fees should be charged from the pupils, but as a rule, within 2 months, every pupil will begin earning 2 to 3 annas a day and a deduction at the rate of 2 annas per rupee earned should be made for the school fund to cover the cost of yarn spoiled and other depreciation charges.

The teacher should be allowed to work in his leisure time and after school hours to enhance his income by weaving if he so desires, provided that he does not sell a single piece of cloth under any circumstances to anyone except the factory."

The Scheme which is being tried at Sirajganj in 7 or 8 centres under the R. D. Council aims at solving a number of problems of the handloom industry simultaneously. The chief drawbacks of the weavers of this country is the lack of adaptability to modern conditions and the demand of changing tastes and fashions. This has its own reasons. The weavers like the rest of the village population are traditionally conservative. They lack contact with town life and get no ideas. They get no facilities for training in improved methods of weaving, and above all, have little facilities for a speedy and satisfactory sale of their products. Barring a few centres of improved weaving, the bulk of the weavers



---

still stick to their time-honoured old-fashioned loom. Their rate of production is extremely low when in spite of every thing time economy is a potent factor. Their choice of design is limited. They can produce either plain coarse cloth or Saris and Napkins of a certain type only, which have no market except with the poorest of the villagers themselves. They have no organisation of their own for the purchase of yarn at nearly wholesale rates or for the satisfactory sale of their finished products. Each individual has to purchase singly and attend the markets with his goods individually. This again involves huge waste of time and energy and compels them to indulge into cut-throat prices, when the goods must be sold for any price to avoid starvation or a collapse of the family finance. The result is a disaster. The weavers as a community have lost their purchasing and earning power and have been, more or less, completely eliminated from the local market. The profession has ceased to be a paying concern and thousands of them have joined the list of landless labourers.

But the community has not yet completely died out nor has the industry lost all its potentialities of expansion and development as a potent factor in building rural economics. There are hundreds of thousands of them still alive in most Districts and will be well occupied if really earnest efforts are made to revive the industry. Men of the landless 'Grihastha-Chashi' class

---

will fall in if it pays, and I see no reason why it should not do so.

The factory schools out-lined in the preceding pages provide the most satisfactory solution I can conceive of. The weaver can learn the use of the new type of semi-automatic machine and can see in practice what difference it makes in the rate of production. He can then go in for one if he can afford or take one on hire-purchase system from the factory where he has learnt its use. He would be well-informed of what the market is likely to demand and what patterns and designs will have the best sale. He can purchase yarn from the factory or until he can afford that, he can work in the factory itself and earn suitable wages. He will not be required to waste his time and go to every hat nor have to wait for days. These goods will be purchased by the factory any day of the week and though he may have to remain content with a little less than what he would have got in an open market, he will soon realise that, in the long run, it pays and saves him lot of time and energy. The factory will have its own markets and whole sale and retail dealers, and will automatically keep a-breast of the demand in the market.

As I have mentioned before, if every cultivator takes up weaving as part-time profession at least for some time till division of labour in the village takes a more definite and satisfactory shape, he will find in it

---

a very substantial supplement to his agricultural income. And it would be day to day a great thing, indeed for the agriculturists. The Bhadrolks, educated and uneducated, can follow suit. I can assure each one of them an income of Rs. 20/- per month at least, free from all botheration. They can learn the art in the school and work inside their homes.

The factory will be there to purchase their products, and they will not have to wander from hat to hat to sell them. Thus weaving provides really a very fair solution of the problems of the Bhadrolk unemployed about whom every body seems to be going crazy. 20 rupees a month is not too small and there is nothing inherently derogatory, in the weaver's job unless, of course, the Bhadralks think that they belong to a different class of humanity whose only function is to rule and lord it over others—a feeling which is unfortunately not uncommon amongst the educated. They have received high education, and therefore, must hold a post of responsibility or blow out the word in the belief of many. This leads me into the system and ideals of education with which I will deal in the chapter that follows.

---

## CHAPTER VI.

### Education.

It is difficult for me to summarise in a short compass all that I feel and think about the various aspects of **Education**. I have already written two addresses on this subject covering more than 100 printed pages and if any one feels interested in my analysis of these problems, he will do well to read them, particularly the 'one, delivered last year at Sirajganj. In this chapter I will confine myself only to a few broad principles of general interest. My criticism may sometimes appear pungent and unpleasant to those with whom I may differ. I do not want any one to take offence and nothing would be intended to do so. It will be merely due to my weakness, the habit of talking straight. I have been trained in the school of science and though I have managed to forget almost everything of that, I have retained the scientist's attitude of mind. Neither Plato nor Aristotle nor any one else can ever be a Gospel for me. I must challenge and test and weigh every thing in the balance of experience before I believe it to be a fact. I want and hope my readers will

---

do the same. For the sake of facility I will deal with education under 4 broad heads, viz:—

1. Primary Education for boys.
2. Secondary Education „ „
3. Female Education.
4. Adult Education.

I will now take them one by one in the order indicated above

## SECTION. 1.

### 1. Primary Education.

Though a good deal has been heard about Primary Education during the last few years the fact remains that this subject has not been given one-tenth the attention it deserves. With the exception of the free compulsory Primary Education Act, 1930 which, I believe, was the only honest effort made to meet the situation, but which for some reason or other, be it the economic depression, be it the dread of opposition, or be it lack of sufficient interest, remained more or less shelved. Nothing of any practical value seems to have been done. The percentage of literacy which is already pretty low has actually gone down in the last census and yet the best brains of the country and the leaders of public opinion

---

have paid little serious attention to this primary need of civilized humanity, unless, of course, we include as material service, their 'stock-in-trade' arguments used in debates against political opponents. The reasons are not far to seek and only reflect the clash of interest that exists between the various strata of society. Primary education does not interest those whose children will get education wherever it may be had. Those who need it are not very keen. The champions of their cause, who are never tired of talking of the "dumb millions" I am afraid, desire that the longer these "dumb millions" remain "dumb millions", the better for the champions. "Unemployed Bhadrals, highly educated youths, sitting idle and the streets of Calcutta packed with vagrant Matriculates" seems to be on the lips of every body. Commissions are sitting, great leaders of thought are conferring together and discussing ways and means for evolving a solution of the 'national problem' of educated unemployed. But what is their number? Hardly more than  $\frac{1}{2}$  a million in a population of 50 millions! What about the rest whom poverty has deprived completely of the facilities of learning even the art of the three R's? What about the huge mass of population who barely get enough to eat? Why does not their condition stir the champions of the nation to the same extent? If the great spokesmen of democracy believe in 'one for each and two for none', why does not the bulk of the population move them to the same pitch of anxiety?

---

Educated youths are certainly valuable assets, the cream of the upper middle class. But inspite of unemployment they do not starve. They do not belong to that class of humanity which has to remain content often with one meal a day only. Most of them possess as much land as half a dozen families of average cultivators do. Why can't they go back to their land to work, to organise their village life and to teach rudiments of knowledge to their neighbours? Have the great centres of learning and high education and have the great thinkers of Bengal ever tried to infuse this ideal of service to humanity at large and have they ever thought about it seriously? Have the students of great Universities been taught to reform and educate their villagers without distinction of caste and creed? I must be really very ill-informed if I am told "yes."

Not that I do not know that even if really sincere efforts had been made in this direction, the result would not have been frightfully important; but has any sincere attempt been made? Anyway it is no use weeping over the past. There are still hundreds and thousands who on the platform, proclaim to lay down their life for the sake of the nation and the country, who claim that they can't see any distinction between a Hindu and a Mussalman, between a Brahmin and a Namasudra. Let them realise that they can't build a nation composed of race ponies and starving goats. Let them know that it does

---

not suit them to talk big and pretend to be friends of the masses without passing through the ordeal of stern realities. No use pretending to be sincere when you are not. It does not take long to find out. Face the realities and enter into the arena of actual service to the masses. Deserve by merit of actual work before you desire to champion the cause of the dumb millions. Much easier to lose one's liberty in the chorus of applause and appreciations by the whole nation. Far more difficult to remain out, work quietly and solidly, unnoticed and unheard-of, in the teeth of discouragement and disappointment. I look forward to see service rendered and if my criticism can induce even a small minority of the really sincere to work for the cause of building a bigger and happier Bengal, I would consider myself very lucky indeed.

I regret that the above discussion took me off the track and tended to become nearly irrelevant to the main issue, the question of Primary Education. Bengal needs Primary Education for every child, male and female, and for every adult, and it is hopeless to think that it can be imparted without being made free and compulsory. It is for this reason that I say that the Hon'ble Sir Nazimuddin's Education Act of 1930 is the only outstanding and honest effort made to meet the situation. I am told it had had a tough sailing in the council, which only bears out my argument set forth above.



You can't educate Bengal's millions without finding money for it. It is not going to rain from the sky. It has got to come out from some source, touch some body's pocket. Conditions during the last 150 years have changed so considerably and cultivation has developed so extensively that the agreement made so long ago can not hold good any longer to the great detriment to the State and the people. The demand on the resources of the State has multiplied, but not its income in the same proportion. The State is obliged to provide for many more facilities today than it used to, 150 years ago, and it is, therefore, logically entitled to demand more. I see no breach of ethical laws involved in this enhanced demand and no justification why the unearned income of the middle man should not be reduced by 25% at least. 'Greatest good to the greatest number' is the one ethics I believe to be most logical and sound. The State has a great task ahead, the supreme duty of civilising its nationals. If it is to function efficiently as a modern State, it cannot avoid performing this primary duty. The proposed reduction of the middleman's profit is the only source to tap. I believe it will bring in about Rs. 3 to 4 crores. This should be utilised exclusively for giving free compulsory education to the rural population. Incidentally it will provide substantial relief towards the problem of the educated unemployed.

---

If anyhow this suggestion does not find favour with the leaders of thought, the education cess should be imposed. If the worst comes to the worst, I would honestly prefer far the starvation of the masses in order to educate them rather than allow them to continue as so many helpless sheep at the mercy of the protected wolves. It is totally wrong to say that the present regime is based on the survival of the fittest. It is survival of the fittest only to a very limited degree—the field of intellect. But man is not wholly intellect. He is a combination of physical self and intellect. Nature allows free scope to both components; normal civilized life only to one.

The question of funds, the chief obstacle disposed of, I now come to a few points of details. For the last two years elaborate enquiries and calculations have been made as to the number and distribution of schools in the rural areas. I am quite sure that limitation of funds has had a deciding influence on these findings. One school to every 3·12 sq. miles area has been suggested. In my opinion all these calculations have no logical basis whatsoever, barring, of course, the question of funds, and are wholly arbitrary. Examples of the Punjab and other provinces have been quoted in support. But though I have been in Bengal only for the last 5 years, I think I can safely say that a distance of one mile is far too long for young children of this province.\* The Punjab

---

is dry and jungles are very rare. But in Bengal, it is difficult to go two furlongs without meeting a ditch and having to pass through jungles and fields. What holds good in the Punjab does not hold good in Bengal. A school in the Punjab may be visible from a distance of two miles and more unless inhabited villages intervene, but it will not be so in Bengal where jungles and trees will cut off the view even on every two furlongs and this factor has a driving influence on the psychology of young children as well as their parents. If schools are made so sparse, number of children attending is bound to fall. Besides, Bengal is very thickly populated and if each village can produce 100 children, there is no logic in compelling them to go one mile. The true criterion is necessity and nothing more.

But I am prepared to admit that for the sake of systematic distribution so that the schools may serve the greatest number, some uniformity of distribution should be observed. 'I would say yes,—one Primary school to every sqr mile of inhabited area of Bengal and one middle school for every 12 sqr miles. Anything less than this will not do.'

A great deal is now-a-days being talked about 'wastage' in Primary Education. This is often advanced as another argument for having a few good schools rather than too many bad ones. I do not know how far the reasons of this wastage are understood. The

---

chief cause of wastage is that after a child has grown to a certain age, the parents can ill afford to spare him for the luxury of attending a school. The child has to accompany the father to the field and help him in cultivation work. Sometimes a child has to be withdrawn from the school, because parents cannot afford to pay the school fees in the upper classes. This is the long and short of the wastage. Make education free and compulsory and wastage will, more or less, disappear.

Coming now to what subjects should be included in the curriculum, what should be the standard of Primary Education in India, I will content myself with quoting a few paragraphs from previous addresses.

The following is a quotation from my Address on Education delivered two years ago.

"I should confess frankly that generally speaking denominational institutions never had any appeal for me nor will probably ever have. I maintain that all Govt. and aided schools should be compelled to make provision for the cultural and religious education of Muslims and non-Muslims alike. Such a step will open facilities to parents of both the major communities to educate their children in the best and most efficient institutions of the country without depriving the children of a religious grounding. It will, at the same time, facilitate contact and exchange of religious ideas which would ultimately lead to the development of a more liberal attitude."

---

I note with satisfaction that the Department of Education has ultimately adopted this view.

With regard to the standard a passage from last year's address on Middle Education will be helpful.

Some how or other I cannot suppress the lessons that my personal observation has taught, inspite of eminent opinions to the contrary. I firmly believe that in India where communication is still bad, club-life non-existent, newspapers few and news-reading habit undeveloped, and wireless still in the imagination only, Primary Education by itself as it is imparted in our primary schools today, to a great extent, goes waste. In the majority of cases it does but little to develop the mind of the child to any appreciable extent or give it a direction, and whatever little is learnt is forgotten in the course of a few years in the stagnant and conservative atmosphere of the village. It does not seem to create any appreciable change in the out-look of the so-called educated child and it seems to me that all we get in result is more or less a mere statistical satisfaction. I cannot, therefore, but repeat what I had the privilege of placing before an eminent authority on the subject 2 years ago, that in India, middle standard of Education will, for years to come, remain the minimum; and while, due to the paucity of funds, we may be compelled to content ourselves with the minimum "something better than nothing," we should not at least lose sight of this hard fact and should not discourage Middle Education where voluntary efforts can provide for it.

---

As regards converting M. E. into M. V. schools, it is enough to mention that M. V. Schools, in preference to M. E. Schools, seem to have no chance whatsoever, and experience has definitely sealed their fate. Any attempt to revive them will be so much energy wasted. Besides, I do not know how Bengal proposes to remain in touch with the rest of India and the outside world without some knowledge of a universal language like English.

I have now only a few words more to add about the condition and the staff of the existing Primary schools. The condition of the existing Primary schools is simply miserable. The economic depression, of course, is to some extent responsible for the unhappy state of things and the unemployment of the highly educated has led to further discouragement and deterioration. But this is not all. There are other causes perhaps more important. The generality of parents being illiterate themselves do not take interest. They have no idea of the need of educating their children nor do many of them insist, even when funds permit, that their children must go to school. The schools are ugly and unattractive and often repulsive, most of the staff, poorly paid as it is, are thoroughly inefficient. The teachers do not know how to make the school attractive and enjoyable for the young children, so that once they have breathed the school atmosphere, they may refuse to leave it in spite of their parents' opposition. Most of the teachers have no idea

---

of child psychology and are incapable of arousing any interest in the lessons they teach.

Obviously the first step to take is to improve the village school sheds and premises. The school should be so many beauty spots in the villages, with a little open space and gardens of their own,— places children would like to swarm around. The school and its up-keep should be a matter of pride for every one in the village. It should be considered the dearest public property, the place where future generation will take shape.

As regards the teacher, you cannot have a good staff without paying good salaries nor can one expect efficiency and good result until most of them are trained.

The child is a very delicate subject with an extremely receptive mind. It is like a soft mould which will take any shape the builder would like to give it. One word of encouragement at the right moment, one moment's patience when the results have been disappointing and one twist in words to arouse interest in things, make all the difference to its susceptible mind. Besides, children of the same age will differ in their inherent faculties and in their degrees of mental development. The person who has to deal with such a delicate material must know his job well and have the patience to accommodate the inherent or acquired defects and deficiencies of individual children. He must know the psychology of the child and must also know the art of adapting him-

---

self to meet the idiosyncracies of his pupils in order to mould and develop them to their best. He must know how to arouse their interest in their lessons and how to amuse them and send them home happy and anxious to return again.

However, this is all commonplace. The point is that the number of trained teachers is low and the rate of production extremely slow. There are a few Guru Training schools in the province, turning out, I believe, on an average 40-50 Gurus in the year. At this rate I think it will take a century before all the Primary schools are staffed with trained hands.

The subject has lately occupied a good deal of my attention and thought and I have evolved a system of training Primary school teachers which aims at training all the untrained teachers of this subdivision in the course of the next two years. I had referred the matter to some eminent experts on the subject and they have agreed with me. What I propose to do is this :—

To good M. A. B. T.'s or B. A. B. T.'s should be engaged and a training camp opened in an H. E. or M. E. School in a convenient centre. 50 untrained teachers of the neighbouring Primary schools and maktabs should be carefully selected to form a batch. A special course of training for 8 weeks should be prepared. The course should be such as would give an easy and practical insight into the psychology of the child and



---

essentials of teaching according to the most modern and accepted theories. It should give the teachers a grip of the practical side of the equipment they need and a good idea of what their responsibilities and duties are.

In a nut shell, what I contemplate is a short term course of training of an easy, theoretical and concentrated practical nature such as would equip the teacher with necessary knowledge of his art and would also create the necessary psychological awakening in his mind of the great part he has to play in the moulding and developing of children of tender age.

If possible, a few interesting lectures on Health and Hygiene, First Aid, Co-operation, and Rural Development may also be delivered. At the end of 8 weeks an examination should be held and certificates granted.

The only other point to be considered is, how will the work of schools, from where teachers will be drawn to the training camp, be run in their absence? Where there are two teachers, as far as practicable, only one at a time should be trained so that one may run the school. But if it is found that the next camp will be too far off and there will be difficulty in boarding and lodging, both the teachers may be trained at one time and temporary arrangement for substitutes made by the teachers concerned. Where there is only one teacher a substitute will be indispensable and the

---

permanent teacher will have to pay half of his salary to him. .

The scheme is now open to you for examination and criticism. I do not think I need add any thing more except that the time has definitely come when India should shake off her usual torpor and infuse a little more go in her activities. I do not say that these camp-trained teachers will be more efficient than those trained under the orthodox scheme. Nor do I say that these camp-trained teachers should not go in for the full course training when they get the opportunity. But the expense involved in training under the orthodox system is too high and consequently the rate of progress is too low to meet India's need. Besides, I refuse to believe that the contemplated 8 weeks' camp-training will be ineffective and the petty sum of Rs. 8000 spent in two years will be wasted. I am convinced that at least this "some thing" will definitely be very much better than "nothing."

This scheme has been tried at Sirajganj and 300 teachers have already been trained. Experts of the Education Department have held inspection and every one seems to be satisfied and eager to adopt it. The course prepared and taught is attached as Appendix I. It was prepared by my trusted colleague Babu G.P. Biswas, M.A.B.T., and discussed in a conference of some leading Head Masters and B.T. teachers of the subdivision. Some outside experts also examined and

---

approved it. The Gurus were given a good tiffin after a regular course of physical exercise according to the Buchanan and Bratachary system every day. They gained in health and felt rejuvenated. The camp life proved extremely interesting and exciting for them. There was a rush of candidates at the beginning of every session. Candidates were taken in after a preliminary test and scores went back disappointed.

In the beginning the elders trained in the old school of thought ridiculed the idea. In a moment of zealous excitement I had once to pull them up and say, "Under-rate it as much as you like, but I will make it a success and see it provincialised." Results have borne me out and I am confident it will have to be provincialised to solve a great problem of Primary Education in the province.

---

\* The reader is referred to Govt. of Bengal, Education Department, Res: no. 1037 Edu. dated the 9th March, 1937, issued by the Hon'ble Khan Bahadur M. Azizul Hoque, C. I. E.; Minister in-charge, P.4, para 1,—

"The large majority of pupils who enter the guru training schools to be trained as teachers have been educated up to class viii or ix in a high school. There cannot be any satisfactory solution of the problem of Primary education which does not provide for better qualified teachers. Unfortunately the present economic situation in Bengal and the magnitude of the task which has to be faced do not permit the initiation of any scheme which would be entirely satisfactory from this point of view. Nevertheless, an attempt must be made to ensure that our Primary school teachers are not only better paid but better qualified for their work. It is proposed that the newly trained teachers to be employed in Primary schools shall in future be matriculates and shall be trained in one of the present new type guru training schools or have undergone a new type of training which it is proposed to initiate. The new type of training will be a continuation course following Matriculation, and it should be possible to develop certain high schools as special training institutions for these teachers." The Primary school teachers' short-course training instituted by Mr. Ishaque is a very near approach to this new type of training.

Publisher.

---

## SECTION II.

### 2. Secondary Education.

In my address of January, 1936, some passages occur which will make useful introduction to this subject.

"I feel that, of late, there has been a general tendency to discourage H. E. Schools. There seems to be too swift a swing of the pendulum against them and many of us have been unconsciously discouraging what is initially good, but defective only in matter of details. It is not the huge number of Graduates and Matriculates that should give cause for anxiety. It is the wrong ideal of education, the service craze, that should be blamed and needs change. I hope statesmen will concentrate more on rectifying this defect than destroying the foundation of civilization and culture.

"A word about vocational education. Vocational education is needed, not merely for its own sake, but for the spread of education itself. Schools have converted hundreds of Agriculturists' sons into weaklings and babus and something must be done to check it. There would be, therefore, a very good thing indeed if one of the following subjects, namely, 1. **Trade and commerce**, 2. **Technical Education and Industries**. 3. **Agricultural Farming**, is made a compulsory part of the curriculum. Each school should be made to specialise in one or more of those subjects, and where there are too many

---

half-starved schools, they may be compelled to amalgamate with one another to make the scheme possible and financially practicable. If this is done, I am confident, we shall not feel the necessity of discouraging High Schools any more, nor shall have to face the after-effects of misdirected education.

The easiest to start with will be **Agricultural Farming**. Apart from the improvement of Agriculture, it will improve the finance of the school and will create the habit of manual labour amongst the boys. It will give them good training to work at home and help their parents. It will make provision both for schooling fees and boarding house expenses for many poor students who are at present compelled to beg for Jagirs and lose much of their self-respect and dignity. In general, it will change the entire out-look of the student community and lead to the development of a much healthier and superior type of students both in body and character."

A brief mention of the number and distribution of schools may profitably be made. I think most of the boys of H. E. School-going age should be able to walk or cycle 3 to 4 miles without difficulty. So if we take the radius of 3 miles round the school each school will have an area of about 28 sq. miles to serve. At this calculation the existing H. E. schools will not be found to be too many in most places. But, of course, the

---

schools must make an honest effort to create a new deal of education amongst the pupils. The service craze must go and a new conception, education for education's sake—for the training and development of mental faculties for making a man a civilized being—brought into existence. I will quote a passage from another address of mine on this point. "Teachers should make it a point to speak on this subject both in the class and outside and weekly debates in school hours should be held on the subject of 'Careers.' This will open the eyes of the boys while they are still young and save them lot of disappointment in later life. If this is done systematically and regularly, and no reason why it should not be done, most of the blame that is laid on H. E School education for the acute unemployment it is supposed to have led to—a perfectly natural phenomenon in the normal course of events which like most other countries India is and will have to face, whatever her system of education—will soon and completely disappear.

But it is undoubtedly true that our education is more academic than our circumstances justify. Our schools devote too much attention to book learning and too little to character-building and to the development of other potential talents. In fact, I honestly dispute if it is proper to engage the boys for six periods on book work. I think 4 ought to be quite enough and 2 should be devoted to stimulate other faculties and for the practical application of the training that the mind has received.

---

To give these ideas a still more definite and practical shape I would suggest that every Middle School in the rural areas should be asked to open an Agricultural Farm under a trained teacher and after a boy has passed the sixth class, an 'ability' and 'means' test should be held before he is allowed to join the H. E. School. Under head 'ability' the capacity of intending pupil for higher education should be thoroughly and carefully tested and under head 'means' it should be ascertained if it will be possible for him and his parents to afford higher education. Those who pass both the tests may be allowed to concentrate on academic subjects alone taking one of the technical subjects as optional if they so desire. For those who fail, a technical subject should be made compulsory and they should be required to pass through in the same way as they have to do in any other compulsory subject like Mathematics, English etc. If they can shine in the academic side also in spite of this, well and good. They will deserve to be pushed up to the University if they can afford. The rest will automatically drop out and be absorbed in the various pursuits for which the school has trained them. In any case they will have the requisite bias and training to enable them to take to Agricultural Farming, Weaving, Business and other careers. They will not find themselves at sea and life will not appear a complete void.

The teachers who are to train students in Agriculture or other technical subjects mentioned, would

---

turally require training for themselves before they are able to train others. Personally I am strongly in favour of short-course practical training classes for teachers in preference to high degrees. In fact, I have prepared a scheme for Agricultural training of school teachers which seems to me both sufficient and effective. Above all, it will enable most of the schools to get trained teachers in the course of a year or two. There will be still another advantage. These teachers will be free from the common weakness of a high degree-holder who is all too conscious of his ability and theoretical knowledge to be of much practical use. But we do not want research in school farms. We want practical work, practical training and practical rural bias, and I hope to give it a fair trial in Sirajganj next year. The rural M. E. Schools in Sirajganj are slowly equipping themselves with necessary land and all the 16 new M. E. Schools, started this year under the Rural Development Movement, possess the necessary land for the proposed Agricultural Farms. I hope to be successful. (**Vide Appendix II**).

I close this section with the remarks that there is really no reason for a great anxiety about the future educated. Things are already taking a good turn. Whatever has so far happened was really unavoidable and natural being inherent in the very conception with which the country took to High English Education. But,



---

in reality, there is nothing seriously wrong with the system of education itself. There will, of course, always remain room for improvement, but to say that the system is totally defective would be talking sheer nonsense.

---

---

### SECTION III.

#### Female Education.

Ours is an age of women. The old school master used to tell us stories of how the great knights of the past used to roam about staking their lives in order to protect and champion the cause of the fair sex. The great Scot and other novelists of his period give us the impression, that the age of chivalry really passed away with them. But is it true? I wonder.

The man of to-day may not go in battle for the fair sex because it is not needed. He may not bow before them in the same fashion and may not show the same traditional courtesy because it is no more liked and appreciated. But he does more. He gives them freedom of thought, freedom of speech, freedom of action freedom to meddle with every affair of his,—things that the grand knights would have shuddered to dream of. He allows them to parley with him in heated debates. He allows them to fight with him in political assemblies, to interfere in state business and war, to combat as obtrusive advanced guards in political agitations. He allows them to compete with him in schools and colleges, in competitive examinations and even to throw him out of employment and usurp his means of livelihood. Yet he loves them, he adores them, he worships them. And

---

the fair sex demand it as a matter of right. Could man really do more, could he really become more chivalrous ?

But I wonder if the fair sex appreciate it. They argue that they have gained ground by sheer strength of inherent ability : that the biased and prejudiced age of the past kept them down by sheer brute force : that their intellectual ability was never given a fair chance : that they have entered in the field rather late and that, given equal opportunities they will, in time to come, hold their own against man in every walk of life. Their great champions argue, have not the fair sex produced a Madame Curie, a Surojini Naidu, a Joan of Arc, and an Amy Johnson, has not this or that girl topped the list in this or that examination ? Yes : they are great names indeed, but only exceptions that prove the rule. As to the other argument it should be remembered that the processes of mental development in the case of women take place far more rapidly than in the case of man. A girl of 20 is fully grown up both mentally and physically and has reached maturity. A boy of 20 is only a kid. He has yet to develop his best and when he does, few of the best amongst the fair sex will stand comparison with him. In the sustained effort that the struggle for existence demands at every step at every moment, they are left miles behind. It is no fault of theirs. It is nature which is to blame. I wish the fair sex would realise the obvious. Certainly have the best and all the freedom you want, but do not blunder into over-confidence against

---

the dictates of nature itself. Don't let inferiority complex get the better of your discretion and judgment. The fair sex has her own special department to run and an exclusively reserved function to perform in the scheme of nature, the home, the family and the bringing up of the future generation—a function important enough, difficult enough and sacred enough to entitle her to the greatest esteem and respect that man can command. This is what the fair sex should know and should feel proud of. The rest is all rough and inferior. Leave that to man.

This might appear a little off the track; but it will be helpful in understanding my views on female education. I really believe that if the elites and the delights know a little of what their respective spheres of duties are, the world would be happier. Below is a paragraph from one of my previous addresses on the same subject.

It is extremely gratifying to note that during the last decade the country has made satisfactory progress in this direction. While in 1921 the number of literate women per thousand was 15, the census of 1931 returned 21. But we should not forget that this progress has brought up the percentage from 15 to 21 only. The number of Primary schools for girls is still very small. However, you need at least as many Primary schools for the girls as for the boys.

---

But before further attempt in this direction is made, the question whether female education is a necessity, and if so, to what extent and of what standard, should be clearly understood.

The need of educating the future mothers of the nation can neither be disputed nor over-emphasised. But the question how far it should go and what should be its aim and ideal is a matter deserving more serious consideration than people are apt to give it. There is a craze for female education and I have known many enlightened people who have been educating their daughters and sisters in High Schools and even Universities in the vain hope of securing their economic independence. I wish I could enter into a detailed discussion of the problem and place the pros and cons side by side, but it will take long. I, therefore, content myself with giving you my advice and warning. Economic independence for women in India is a perfectly rotten and thoroughly impracticable idea. Eve has not been created for that purpose and simply will not do in that line. Her proper sphere is home and the bringing up of children, a heaven-assigned task for which she is admittedly fitted by nature herself. In other lines she will simply make a mess. A few geniuses may rise, one out of a million, who may shine as such but in comparison with men they sink into insignificance. Eve cannot and will not stand against man.

---

Nature itself seems to have ruled out her standing at par with her stronger and superior life-partner, the man.

But supposing she does and succeeds in pushing out all the men from their offices and occupations, what would be the result? Who will look after the family and what will happen to those who would go on the unemployment list? It will add to the misery of the country.

So I would say that sending the girls to the University and other Higher Institutions is so much money and energy wasted at the cost of their health and neglect of their home. Their Matriculations should be equivalent to the Middle schools and their graduation to the present Matric. Their course of studies should be distinctly different and should include more of what they really need for the home than for the rest. To give them the same courses as to the boys which are too heavy for their delicate constitutions is to give them more than is good for them and can only lead to waste of national energy. So please think carefully before you go crazy after higher education for girls. At best you can have one High School for every sub-division which you perhaps need not only for the graduation of your daughters and sisters but incidentally for producing female teachers. A High School should provide for the highest standard of education that the people may reasonably look for.

---

Regarding M. E. and Primary education I think you should have many more girls' schools than you have at present, provided you do not forget that the curriculum for girls should be short and quite different from that for boys. But your poor country cannot afford separate schools for girls and boys and separate buildings and equipment. Even if it could, I think it would be a misuse of national wealth. You should utilise the existing M. E. and Primary school buildings for girls' schools also which should sit from 7 to 10 A. M. Three hours ought to be quite enough and should make female education an easy and practical proposition for all those who want to educate their children both male and female.

The question of building and equipment having been solved, where necessary, by further improvement of buildings, the question of recurring cost for the salaries of the teachers will not be difficult. Three hours between 7 to 10, A. M. will allow many philanthropic gentlemen engaged in other occupations to work on small allowances and honorarium and so the maintenance cost will not be heavy.

The only point to be considered is that there is no such course at present as will be suitable for girls and fit in with the three hours scheme. This is not difficult to prepare. The University and other authorities, of course, may not recognise it, may not

---

grant certificates and diplomas. But if you work it out and go ahead, I am quite sure the University also, sooner or later, will be compelled to do so. Even if it does not, what will be the harm? You stand to lose nothing. You require useful education for your girls and not certificates to send them out a-hunting jobs.

I have now only a few words more to add about this course. I think, in the case of girls, a **4 years' course** should be more than enough, and I would name the four classes, not class I, II, III, IV, but **the good daughter, the good sister, the good house-wife** and the final to be **the good mothers' class**. I would teach them mostly what they should know and will actually require in later life—the various stages of a house-holder's life and home science. This they will remember and actually put into practice. Rudiments of general knowledge should certainly be taught, but without losing sense of proportion. I have tried to actually prescribe this course in consultation with my colleague Mr. G. P. Biswas, M. A., B. T., and some others and if possible it will be attached to this chapter as Appendix III.

---



---

## SECTION IV.

### 4. Adult Education.

Adult education is rather a new subject. In fact when I sat down to write out my address last year I could get no information and no guidance from any quarter. Nor have I been able to discover anything since. Recently a friend of mine Prof. Tripurari Chakraverty, M. A., of the Calcutta University presented me a copy of the Calcutta Review in which an address of Dr. Amarnath Jha of U. P. on Adult Education was published. I read it with excited interest, but found it only a tame descriptive second-hand. Dr. Jha has described the system of Adult Education introduced in America, Germany, Italy, and Folk schools of Holland. He has invited the attention of educationists to the peculiarly different problem of the Indian masses. But he has no suggestion to make and stops exactly at the point from which I want to begin. The continental models are run on the basis of existing foundations, meant for those who have already acquired the rudiments of knowledge. But the problem that I have set my mind to face is different. There is nothing like existing foundation in the case of the masses of India. They have to be taught first these rudiments—the three R's as they are called; and the problem is how to do that. I cannot, therefore, blame

---

the Education Department if my views took them by surprise. The idea was entirely my own and at least novel if not altogether foreign. Since then things have, however, changed. An Adult Education Committee has been set up. Some reference has been made by the committee to the work being done by some professor of Shanti Niketan. I am not in possession of all the details, but my impression is that here again the western model has been introduced with the same object—to refresh and enlarge the scope of knowledge of those who, due to lack of contact, are rapidly forgetting whatever they had learnt and are deteriorating.

The Adult Education Committee referred to are contemplating to make use of the services of the Sub Registrars and such other local officers and non-officials as may be able to spare some time for occasional visits to the centres of adult education. They are to read and lecture on topics likely to be of use to the rural population. But, in my opinion, this will neither work nor go much deeper. The organisation will be so limited and the work so occasional in character that it will never touch the core of the problem. By way of something-is-better-than-nothing, the scheme may be admirable but considering the vastness of the problem and the thick veil of illiteracy that covers the whole countryside, it will hardly be more than an eye-wash.

The conception of adult education that I have in

---

mind is Primary education of the illiterate adult population of the country. I do not propose to attack the problem of adult females for good reasons, but I firmly believe that the male population consisting of the adolescent, the youths, the middle-aged and even the very old will respond to treatment and I am not prepared to brush them aside as 'bad boys.' Some of them, the very old perhaps, may appear reluctant, but I do not like to let even these escape—not a single individual howsoever infirm. Difficulties will, of course, arise and exceptions will have to be made but that will only prove the rule. The mass of Bengal must be educated and it is my firm conviction that the majority can be made literate and sufficiently educated in the course of five years. The statement may appear startling, but I know exactly what I am talking and I emphatically repeat that I mean it. A will and a determination is all that is wanted. The rest will follow.

But such a task, I must clearly state at the outset, cannot be performed by mere pious wishes and preachings. A certain amount of compulsion is indispensable and cannot possibly be avoided if the dumb millions are to be educated. The birth-right to remain illiterate is to be refused totally.

There is, however, no intention that any oppression be committed on them or any harsh punitive measures taken against any one. They will not be necessary.

---

It would be quite enough if along with extensive preaching and propaganda a responsible officer like the circle officer of whom I want one for every 8 Unions in Bengal, is empowered to impose a symbolical illiteracy tax on those only who, in spite of being provided with reasonable facilities, would insist on remaining illiterate. Let the public servants of a democratic Government be treated with more confidence and vested with a little more authority to impose this symbolical illiteracy tax, a few annas not exceeding Rupee one per month in very rare cases, as exemplary punishment. Let them have a little more say in part II of the Union Board Budget (Education and other works of public utility) and then proceed on with a night school in every village, financed by Mushtibhiksha (doles) collected from amongst the villagers themselves and supplemented by a grant of Rs. 2/- per month from the Local Union Board. A total sum of Rs. 5/- to Rs. 7/- per month is enough to run a night school as efficiently as you like.

And this is all easy and practicable. In fact the state need not bother about financing the night schools at all. They will look after themselves. An official like the C. O. with only 8 Unions to supervise—a demand which, I will prove in a later chapter, can and should be fulfilled without additional cost should and will be able to see if the state insist that the system works smoothly. There will be no dearth of teachers and no difficulty of accommodation where there is a nicely and

conveniently situated school inside the village itself and the Night school will sit in the same premises. Where there is none, the villagers can themselves subscribe bamboos and straw and can build a neat and open shed with voluntary labour. No further cost will be necessary to incur. Ditmar lamps can be contributed as donation from the D. B., Rs. 5/- per village, for 'two lamps' is certainly not very much considering that for a whole District like Pabna the total cost will not exceed Rs. 15000/-. If a road project has to be kept in abeyance for that reason, let it remain so by all means. The country needs education far more than anything else. It is the adult parents more than the inherent capacities of the children that will decide what the future generation will be and it is they who count in the world of the present. The children do not matter so much just now. They have still to grow and become adults before their voice can be heard. Let the adults be treated first.

As to what should be the **special course** for the adults,— I have discussed the details in my address from which I would presently quote. I propose to divide it into 6 parts—each to continue for six months. The 1st would consist of alphabets, simple reading and writing, a little knowledge of weights and measures and such other elementary arithmetic as the villagers need and must know. The 2nd part would consist of the rudiments of general and useful knowledge necessary

---

for rural population. The 3rd, a little higher and so the 4th, 5th and the 6th. The language should be simple. The subject matter should be dealt with in short and simple stories and should contain as liberal a sprinkling of humour as may be practicable and possible. Parts I and II of the series have been completed at Sirajganj though I cannot say how far the member in charge of the adult course, Moulvi Abul Hossain, Hony. Magte. and retired Inspector of Police, who has edited them, has been able to keep to my instructions and ideals. The rest will be composed of selections from other authors. The following is a quotation from my address which will recapitulate and throw additional light on the subject,—

“In a country like India where the percentage of literacy never seems to have exceeded 6 or 7 %, the need of adult education can hardly be questioned. To think that our adults will not respond to systematic teaching is to be absurd. It contradicts all experience and observation. Just as in the case of children so in the case of adults, individuals will differ in their mental capacities and make-up. Some are quick and some are slow and the reaction and the response, to teaching must naturally be different with different individuals.

But properly handled and coached, the adult will learn and derive the same benefit as does the child, if not, as I personally think, greater.

---

Some may, however, argue that funds being limited it is a sounder investment to educate the children who will form the adult nation of the future or that given equal opportunities the illiterate adults of to-day who did not avail themselves of the chance offered to them before, have forfeited all claims to be tried again. It seems to me that both these arguments are open to challenge. No doubt the child is the father of the man and so deserves very great attention. But with the exception of a few individuals here and there who have risen to the top without depending on the training and influence of their parents, it is absurd to deny that normally it is the parents who make what the children would be. It is they who infuse in the children the desire to learn. It is they who give them training and build their character. It is they who send them to school and decide how far they will read and what, if any thing at all. It is obvious then that until the state takes complete charge of bringing up children and education becomes free and compulsory, the influence of the parents and their attitude towards education and other allied matters will continue to play a deciding part in the general make-up of the future generations.

As for the other argument, there is really no sense in saying, at least in India, that all the illiterate adults had had their opportunities. But even if some of them had, it is an admitted fact that man's mental

---

development does, not follow any rigid scale with relation to his age. Some develop quickly and others take years and many a dull boy at the school has proved how meritorious he can be when fully matured. I, therefore, do not see any reason whatsoever why adult education should not get the same attention as the education of the child. The only explanation that I can suggest of our present neglect seems to be our usual adherence to whatever our ancestors have thought or done before and have laid down for us to follow.

But, of course, the handling of adults will, naturally have to be quite different from that of the child and so would be the curriculum and the system of coaching. The adult, carrying the worries of life and the burden of the family on his shoulder as he does, will need very much more amusement also. His school will have to be a recreation hall where he can sit, talk, smoke and enjoy and yet learn regularly and systematically with keen interest. A course of simple but interesting and instructive lectures, so arranged and graded with respect to their subjects as to arouse the interest in the adult mind, will have to be prepared. Script should, of course, form part of the training, but it is not in my opinion an indispensable qualification of an educated man. There have been scores of highly educated men who did not know the art of reading and writing and it should not be lost sight of that literacy is not education. It is only a means to an end, the education of the mind.



An eminent authority on education has remarked that in his opinion adult education is "something" built on the existing foundation. I do not dispute this, but with due respect I differ to go a step further. India's 95% illiterates cannot be ignored any longer particularly as I have said before when this ratio seems to have become permanent, nay, is getting worse. Of course there are practical difficulties on the score of funds. But how will the funds come if we do not even appreciate the position and make the people realise it and help themselves by voluntary efforts? Progress made under the present system of teaching children only has been, by no means, encouraging and some thing more must be done in addition to it.

Perhaps there are ways out of difficulties. In my opinion the Village school should be the place to be concentrated upon and improved to serve as the village school, village hall and every thing. As I have mentioned in my address on rural development, it should be **a girl's school 7 - 10 A. M., boy's school 11 A. M. - 4 P. M., Night school and club 6 - 9 P. M.,** It can easily serve all these purposes and India can ill-afford to waste these opportunities.

As to how the illiterate adult should be taught it is a matter that experts should discuss and decide. I have only a few suggestions to make which are as follows :—

---

**A Rough programme for the education of the illiterate adults.**

**Part I.**

1. Alphabets, reading and writing.

2. Numbers :— 1—100.

Addition, Subtraction, Multiplication and Division:

3. English Numbers :— 1—100.

Roman       ,,       1—12.

**Part II.**

1. (i) Simple anatomy of the human body.

(ii) Physiology.

(iii) Care of the body, infection and disinfection.

(iv) How do epidemics of Cholera, Small-pox, Malaria, etc spread ?

Their prevention.

(v) Injection and vaccination.

2. Geography of the village, thana, district and province. Important cities of India, how to travel, leading on to elementary conception of the globe.

3. Simple lessons and stories from Indian History leading on to Union Boards, Provincial Government, Government of India, Legislative Council and the vote.

4. The need of education and the ideal of education.

5. How can agriculture and cattle be improved ? How to supplement the income of peasantry, cottage industries.

---

6. How is trade and business carried on ? How to succeed in business.

7. Elementary Science, Vapour, clouds, rain, storms, simple science of weather.

8. The railway engine, telephone, telegraph, with remarks leading on to wireless.

9. Character, honesty, truthfulness etc.

10. Co-operation— what can it do ? How to co-operate for a common cause and improve life in the village clubs, social life etc.

11. Current topics.

12. Essential unity of religion : need of toleration.

13. Islam : lives of great Muslims.

14. Hinduism : „ „ „ Hindus.

15. Any other useful subject.

16. A daily or weekly newspaper, preferably non-political like **“The Palli pradiip”** of Sirajganj.

Lessons and teaching should be simple interesting and amusements such as music, humorous speeches, caricatures should intervene between the lessons.

---

# Appendix I.

## Syllabus for a two-month's course of Training for Primary School Teachers, Sirajganj.

### 1. Educational Psychology :—

Education ; its aim ; child mind : its contents, growth and development : instincts and how to sublimate them : apperception : Association : Interest : Attention : Causes of Inattention : Memory : Habits and their formation : The Playway in Education : Esprit de corps : Teacher's personality.

### 2. Methods of teaching different Subjects :—

(A) Bengali Literature :—

(i) Loud Reading : to be supplemented by pattern reading : special emphasis on correct pronunciation and proper intonation.

(ii) Silent Reading under the supervision of the teacher. Questions to elude what is read : Summarisation of paragraphs.

(B) Composition : Oral accounts of things seen, heard or learnt : invention of stories : expansion of ideas : Letter writing : Paragraph construction : Punctuation :

(i) Words or hints may be drawn out from children by questions and put on the B. B. .

(ii) The same given by the teacher himself.

(iii) The teacher to supervise by going round the class and helping the children with hints here and there : Individual attention. The best work to be pointed out and held before the class for emulation. The Teacher's attention to be concentrated on the slow boys through sympathy and help.

Home work : proof sheet method of correction with red ink. Rewriting of tasks corrected : Testing how far the tasks are acquired by means of test questions.

(C) (i) Spelling : Its recent reforms according to the memorandum issued by the Vice-Chancellor, C. U. and committee : Correct visualisation of words : Defects due to ~~p~~al-observation or non-observation. Words open to confusion to be written on the B. B., uttered and written several times over to ensure the correct forms : words to be illustrated in sentences.

(ii) Dictation :— (a) From the seen and intelligible.

(b) „ „ unseen but intelligible.

The teacher's stand in the class : Boys posture : correction by boys by interchange : Teacher's supervision : General mistakes : their correction on B. B. Teacher's note-book containing the correct forms.

(D) Bengali Grammar.

Methods :—

(i) First examples : then to deduce rules.

(ii) Appreciation of literature or story interest not to be marred by Grammar grinding.

(iii) Reference to Grammatical interest sparingly through literature lesson : Old method and modern method of dealing with literature and Grammar :

(E) Handwriting : Its importance in life : Specimens on B. B. Bodily posture of boys : correct way of holding pencil and pen : Dented paragraphs : correct spacing of words and lines : margin ; letters with similar formations to be taken together, such as (i) অ, অত, ত, তে, 'ব ক ক খ ঝ' and so on.

(ii) (In English) *i u l t, m n h p, a d g q, c e* and so on.

(iii) Small letters English (optional) to precede capital letters

(iv) Ornamental capital letters to be avoided at first. Letters with like curves, parallel strokes, bends and pot-hooks to be taken together.

First legibility and neatness, then beauty and speed.

(F) Arithmetic and Shubhankari : Mental Arithmetic : The syllabus for the Primary Final Examination : Guess work, Mental drill with small practical examples : Deduction of Rules Shopping and everyday Arithmetic ; Arithmetical proof of Shubhanker's methods. Correct use of Scale, Area by actual measurements, Reading of Dakhlilas (Rent receipt), Writing of documents, etc.

(G) History, Methods of teaching history; the concentric method, Story element, Principal personalities of each era; Details later; line of time; Sketch maps; use of pictures and diagrams, Summarisation on B. B. The age-long memory work to be discarded; effects of British Rule. The Legislative Assemblies, Vote, Franchise, Municipalities, D. B., U. B., L. B. etc.

(H) Geography, Its definition—story of man in relation to his life on this earth—not a catalogue of names and places, Compass, shape and size of earth, its motion: day and night, change of seasons; climates; rainfall; how to measure rainfall, special geographical features of India and specially Bengal; Rajshahi Division and Pabna; Railways of Bengal: Chief products: Map, drawing and reading; Ref. Any Text Book of classes III and IV.

#### (I). Elementary Science and Hygiene :—

Air, how it is rendered impure; storm: Fire Brigade; Thermometer; water; vapour; mist; cloud; rain; dew; cleanliness; epidemics; vaccination; foodstuff; vitamin; exercise: cheerfulness; ventilation; children's posture of sitting and standing; Fatigue; recreation; First aid.

#### (J) (i) Drill and Physical Exercise :—

Exercises; free hand, of the trunk, neck, arms and legs: formation of ranks and files: some 30 games: Hadudu and Dariabandha etc. Breathing Exercise, Buchanan system to be followed.

(ii) Bratachari Exercise; History of Bratachari movement; The Bratachari “*পল*” and “*স্বপল*” and Principles; some action songs; Kathi dance and Raibeshe dance (optional). Classes and Demonstrations to be arranged by physical and Bratachari Instructors of the attached H. E. School in consultation with the Head master according to the syllabus attached.

### 3. English :—

Loud Reading: Conversation in simple questions and answers. Explanation and summarisation in Simple Bengali; Translation of simple Bengali sentences into English. Vocabulary upto about-200 words.

Model in Dr. West's New method Readers, Primer 1A. Handwriting as in Bengali (above).

#### 4. School Organisation and Management :—

(a) School site, air and ventilation ; seating arrangement ; Parallel benches one behind the other preferable to the ordinary quadrangular form, uses of the B. B. and crayon, Time-Table ; School records, Teacher's duty outside class room ; co-operation with parents and guardians.

(b) Discipline, Management of students under instruction ; Punishments and rewards ; How to deal with bullies and absence, class drill.

(c) Teaching ; class and individual teaching ; notes of lesson ; Teaching devices ; maxims of method—simple to complex, known to unknown ; five-step method. Curriculum, its usefulness.

5. (a) **Demonstration lesson** :— 1 lesson every day in the morning by each Instructor—i. e. 2 lessons by the 2 Instructors.

(b) **Criticism lesson** :— By the Teachers under Training ; 4 periods of 35 minutes each in each of two Pr. School's. One teacher will teach and his associate or partner will watch. In the next period the reverse—thus in each of the two schools 8 teachers, 4 in each of the upper 2 classes in each school, will teach. Hence 16 teachers will be occupied in the schools. The last 5 weeks will be devoted to Practice Teaching. Every teacher will thus be required to deliver at least 6 to 8 lessons. The two Instructors to go round and supervise. For criticism lessons Monday to Friday—26 periods. Saturday 2 periods—22 periods per week. Hence in 5 weeks  $22 \times 5 = 110$  periods available. 110 periods—16 teachers (each day) —6 (at least). The remaining 14 lessons may have to be dropped out for holidays, discussion etc.

## Rules and Regulations

1. It is a two-month's course of training and the teachers under training are expected to try their level best to derive as much benefit as possible by a steady and conscientious pursuit of the course.
2. Instructors are to keep necessary records such as Attendance Register, criticism lesson Register, notes on Demonstration and criticism etc.
3. Punctuality and sincerity should be insisted on. Strict camp discipline should be observed.
4. Criticism lesson in the Pr. schools should be given according to the normal routine and text books of the respective classes.
5. Teachers should provide themselves with a note book for each subject.
6. Instructors should dictate notes where necessary. They should sign the notes of teachers every day to see that the trainees are in right earnest.
7. Teachers should try to provide themselves with copies of "**Bibidha Bidhan**" by Aghorenath Adhikary and "**Sikhsa Bijnan**" by K. B. Abdur Rahman.
8. Ordinarily no leave should be granted. Unnecessary absence should be reported to the office.
9. Head masters of local H. E. Schools will be requested to give every possible help by way of lending B. B.'s, charts, maps and necessary apparatus, service of Physical and Bratachari Instructors etc.
10. At the end of the course a short examination in two papers, one written, and one practical, will be held and certificates granted to successful teachers. Teachers securing 60% marks or more will be placed in class I; those that will secure 45% to 59% will be put in class II; marks between 36% and 44% will be declared mere pass.
11. All the teachers must take part in games and drill. They will be required to take the drill and games classes. Their



ability will be recorded as in the criticism lessons and general conduct.

12. The training is meant to equip the teachers the better for their profession. Trained teachers will always have preference whenever any vacancy occurs.

13. Untrained teachers or teachers who could profit little by this short course will have to leave in favour of trained and really capable ones.

14. Teachers who profit by this training and are reported have grown in efficiency in their respective schools are sure to get a higher remuneration.

15. The successful completion of the course depends entirely on the skill and efficiency of the Instructors who are to see that only general and most essential points are inculcated in the simplest and shortest possible way along the lines suggested.

16. Instructors are required to submit weekly reports on the progress made and attend a monthly conference at the Headquarters on a Sunday for discussion and guidance.

17. Instructors may modify the routine, if necessary, with an eye to better progress and convenient working.

18. At the commencement of the session, teachers will be required to sit for an admission test and those who are successful will be admitted to the course preference being given to passed matrices and teachers read up to the matric standard.

---

## PERIODS OF WORK.

<b>Morning</b>	{	7.	30—8.	10	Psychology
		8.	10—8.	50	Methods
		8.	50—9.	30	School organisation and management and Demonstration Lessons on alternate days.
		9	30—10	5	Demonstration lesson.
.					
<b>Noon</b>	{	*12.	30—1.	5	Criticism lesson in 2 or 3 Primary Schools.
		1.	5—1	40	do
		2.	—2.	35	do
		2.	35—3.	10	do
.					
<b>Afternoons</b>		3.	30—4.	10	Drill and games. Tiffin on the field.
<b>or</b>		3.	40—4	20	
.					
<b>Evening</b>		6 P. M.	· 7 P. M.	General topics, Talks by Doctors, Educationists, amusement etc.	

As days lengthen with the change of seasons, the routine may be changed a little, morning session commencing earlier i. e. at 7 A. M.

---

\*Criticism lessons may commence later, at 1. 25 P. M. according to the discretion of the Instructors to suit convenience.

## Appendix II.

### A scheme for opening Agricultural gardens or Farms in H. E. & M. E. Schools.

The departmental scheme contemplates the recruitment of Graduate Teachers from selected H. E. Schools for training at Dacca. Usually 15 teachers are selected every year from Bengal and are kept under training for two years. After they have qualified, they return to their respective schools. The Government make capital grant of Rs 500/- or Rs 2000/- for a garden or a farm as the case may be. They also pay Rs 10/- p. m. as allowance to the teacher.

It is clear that a period of 50 to 100 years will be required before every school can get a chance to avail itself of this opportunity. But why should so much time be lost? What is the intention? Do the results, where such gardens or farms have been opened justify this expense and delay?

Perhaps the intention is to give a good theoretical and practical grounding in agriculture to those who may choose to take to it as a career. I must confess that the little that I have seen of those gardens or farms has not impressed me much and what is worse still, at least this is my observation, these departmentally trained agricultural teachers seem to think that once they have obtained the certificates, there is little else to do. No one can question that they are agricultural experts and are capable of running the farms if they want to, but unfortunately they seldom do.

As I have said elsewhere, they seem to be too conscious of their theoretical knowledge to be of much practical use. The question now is, do we desire to make school boys research scholars and expert theorists and can this hope materialise under

the present system? I am not sure. I think the few research institutes and colleges and the District Agricultural Farms only can meet this need and not the ordinary schools.

In my opinion the main purpose of opening a garden or a farm in schools, is or ought to be the maintenance of the dignity of manual labour, introduction of new and improved crops and to give the boys a healthier outlook on life. Manual labour should become part of the regular routine of every boy's life and he should be able to look back to the soil if other occupations do not suit him. He should be able to help his peasant father and should not shrink from driving the plough with him. It should save a cultivator's son from becoming a weakling and a '*Babu*.'

For this, all we need is practical work and any teacher interested in manual work and trained for three months in a District Agricultural Farm should do.

Training camps can be opened in each District Agricultural Farm or one in two or three districts combined. A special course of study, combined with actual manual labour and hard work should be imparted; 50 teachers can be trained in each batch every year and on return open gardens and farms on the definite understanding that 25% of the profit made by the farm will be given to them as their remuneration.

The District Agricultural Officer can periodically visit these gardens and give further advice.

This is, in a nutshell, the scheme I put forward before J. Bottomly, Esqr., I. E. S., Director of Public Instruction, Bengal, in 1935, who remarked, "This extract contains strong criticism of the Agricultural scheme which was carefully worked out by the Department of Agriculture and Education and this must be very carefully considered. There is no doubt that the existing approved scheme has not brought the success which was anticipated and it is possible that the alternative scheme proposed by Mr. Ishaque will have a greater chance of success in Patuakhali (I see no reason why it should not succeed elsewhere also). This must be gone into very carefully in conjunction with the Agriculture Department."

Of course I do not say that research institutes, colleges and experts will not be required. They will be, most certainly, and still better arrangements should be made for that purpose if possible. But these two things are different and issues should not be mixed up. The time factor is a thing to be seriously considered. We want actual work and progress at some reasonable pace.

**Note :—** ( Further details may be seen in my printed address to Education Conference held in Patuakhali in March, 1936 ).

---

## Appendix III.

### A four years' syllabus of Girls' Education.

**Good Daughter— Good Sister— Good Housewife—  
Good Mother.**

The above four divisions into which a syllabus of Girls' Education is proposed to be divided should not be taken to mean that each is an isolated and watertight one. In essence they overlap and extend from one to the other. The nomenclature is based on the principle that both nature and social custom have created different spheres of function for the male and female and this should underlie any ideal syllabus of Girls' Education. This is, in a way, a distinct departure from the traditional parallel course of studies imparted to boys and girls alike with all the attendant evils. The proper sphere of womankind is the home and women should be taught, first and foremost, all that the home needs. This they would actually require in life and would make use of. It will equip them with what they should know and it would lead to the happiness not only of the home but of the nation as a whole.

It is to be observed, however, that there is no intention to stop such of the fair sex from aspiring to become philosophers and scientists as have the aptitude and the opportunity to afford that luxury. The course prescribed here is intended to meet the need of the generality of the girls of our country whose means are limited and whose time and energy, health and grace seem to be more or less utterly wasted in learning the existing course of studies.

The Good Daughter, the Good Sister, the Good Housewife and the Good Mother are the natural and chronological stages, often identical, in the life of a normal woman and the course prescribed attempts to take into account the general and the special needs of those different stages.

It is suggested that this course should be taken up after the girls have acquired their alphabets which would approximately mean classes I and II of the ordinary primary schools. There should be no strict age limit, but roughly 8 to 9 years age should be found suitable for entering into the Good Daughter's Class.

Many grown-up girls, and mothers too, may be benefited by undergoing this course if suitable arrangements are made.

No finality is claimed for this course and experts are welcome to improve upon it. It is only a crux on the highroad of education pointing to the right way.

## PERIODS OF WORK.

### Morning Class.

6.	15—6.	30	...	...	Prayer.
6.	30—7.	5	...	...	1 period
7.	5—7.	40	...	...	1 "
7.	40—8.	15	...	...	1 "
8.	15—8.	45	...	...	Recess & games for 20 mts.
8.	45—9.	20	...	...	1 period
9.	20—9.	50	...	...	1 "
9.	50—10.	20	...	...	1 "

**Total—** 6 periods of work including games for about 20 minutes.

### Good Daughter (Age 8—9).

1. **Vernacular** (Bengali):— A text book with lives of some eminent men and women of Bengal: poems especially suitable for small girls: some stories from Hitopadesh and Æsop's Fables: a book of 60—70 pages; 6 periods in the week.

2. **Arithmetic** :— Simple addition, Subtraction, Multiplication : simple mental Arithmetic : 6 periods in the week.

3. **History** :— Simple stories from Hindu and Islamic Epics and from the Bible : lives of some heroes of Bengal. A text book of 40—50 pages, copiously illustrated. 3 periods.

4. **Geography** (of Bengal) :— Lives of some explorers : the earth : rotation ; day and night : natural divisions : Subdivision : P. S. : District : Bengal : (with maps, models and diagrams), 3 periods.

5. **Personal & Domestic Hygiene** :—

Correct posture ; personal cleanliness : air : water : food : fly : flea : mosquito and other pests : how to dress small brothers and sisters : guarding against their play with pice, pins, marbles etc.—6 periods.

6. **Moral & Religious Education** :— Some slokas from Chanakya : some stotras : muslim prayers and some texts from the Holy Quoran : (different for different communities)—6 periods.

7. **Drawing & Needle work** :— Drawing from models, viz, kettle, tub, teapot : some fruits and common birds ;

Plain knitting : stitching of rents : letters on canvas : paper pattern of a chemise—6 periods

### Good Sister ( Age 9—10 ).

1. **Vernacular** (Bengali) :— A text book with lives of eminent women of Bengal and other countries, of some heroes of Bengal, poems and stories from Hitopadesh and Aesop's Fables, a book of 60—70 pages. 6 periods.

2. **Arithmetic** :— Simple division : some accounts after Shubhankar's methods, (oral) : cubit, yard, feet, inch, length, breadth, height, chhataks, seers, maunds, bigha, katha etc. 6 periods.

3. **History** :— Some heroes of Bengal and India in chronological order : Buddha, Christ, Hajrat Muhammad : Chaitanya, Asoka, Harsha.—3 periods.

4. **Geography** :— Dew, mist, cloud, rain, storm, earth-quake : seasons : products of Bengal and India (chiefly cotton, silk, jute, tea coal, tobacco, metals,) Railways and rivers of Bengal. 6 periods.



5. **Hygiene** (Domestic & personal).— Household wash : sunning of beds : ventilation : arrangement of cattle : disposal of refuse : ideals of household : play with brothers and sisters in the open air : cheap filters : food value : vitamin—6 periods.

6. **Cookery & Household work** :— Ideal cutting of vegetables : storing : cooking of rice, *dal*, *bhaji*, vegetable curry, bread and chapati, husking : sifting—3 periods.

7. **Moral & Religious Education** :— Reading portions of the Gita in Bengali and of some texts of the Holy Quoran in Bengali : domestic worships : diniyat : some stotras and slokas : liberalism and catholicity : harmful superstitions—3 periods.

8. **Drawing and needle work** :— Drawing from models, of flowers, leaves, some fruits ; Black board drawing with crayon : cutting of petticoats, blouse, baby's vest : use of colour box : decoration of the household and table—3 periods.

### Good Housewife (Age 10—11).

1. **Vernacular** (Bengali) :— Some lives of eminent men : lessons on domestic economy and obligations to neighbours, landlords : duties towards members of the family, to children and servants : lessons on sacrifice, justice and temperance—a text book of 70—75 pages—6 periods.

2. **Arithmetic** :— Simple accounts : simple fractions : every day arithmetic : country measures and weights : money order, rules and rates of Postal Registration and book packets : household budget : rent and rent-receipt—6 periods.

3. **English** :— Alphabets : number : Roman numbers : simple sentences : vocabulary to about 200 words—3 periods.

4. **Hygiene** :— How to recognise fresh and good food : adulterants : disinfectants : preventives against epidemics : vaccination : balanced diet : defects in the cooking process : their remedy : first aid :— bandaging : compress, fomentation : hemorrhage : high fever : cuts : burns : snake-bite and dog-bite—6 periods.

5. **Cookery & Household work** :— Preparation of meat, polao, halua, chatni, luchi etc. : Fruits and green vegetables in every day diet : defects in the general dietary : vitamin :

kitchen garden and its utility : utilisation of waste lands near the house : milking and foddering of cattle—6 periods.

'6. **Drawing & needle work** :— Geometrical drawing ( of circle, cubes, squares etc ) : some limbs of animals and man : vests, chemise, blouse making with needle work : the spinning wheel : earning from weaving nets, comforters, netbags etc.—3 periods.

#### 7. **Elements of Midwifery & child rearing** :—

The illiterate country *Dhais* : ideal lying-in-room : the processes in the growth and development of the normal child : nursing of the mother : care of the child : its early education : effect of the sun, free air on the baby—6 periods.

8. **Moral & Religious Education** :— A little extension of the previous year's course. ( Prayer time ).

### **Good Mother** ( Age 11—12 ).

#### 1. **Vernacular** ( Bengali ) & **General Topics** :—

(i) Lessons on some scientific inventions such as Motor Car, Railway Engine, Aeroplane etc.

(ii) Lives of some explorers.

(iii) Talks on the U. B., Vote, Assembly. village civics : evils of party factions ; indebtedness Co-operative credit societies.

(iv) Writing of Money Order forms, deed and documents, etc. —6 periods.

2. **English** :— Simple stories up to a vocabulary of about 400 words—6 periods.

3. **Hygiene** :— Structure of the human body : function of the organs : antiseptics : nursing : invalid diets ; reading the thermometer and taking the pulse. Evils of tobacco : some popular and simple Ayurvedic and Hekim cures of worms, cough, fever, diarrhea, dysentery, boils, itches etc. Some Homeopathic medicines : preventive treatment of Malaria ; tuberculosis, small-pox : Cholera etc.—6 periods.

#### 4. Elements of Midwifery & child-rearing :—

Continuation of previous year's course : how to treat pregnancy : superstitions : instincts of children, their treatment : Mother School : Maternity and Child Welfare Movements—6 periods.

5. **Cookery & Household work** :— How to prepare the right sort of breakfast for children and grown-ups : the popular and cheap method : preparation of *chira*, *muri*, *khai*, *moorki*, *naru* and cakes : economy and simplicity in feasts : reception of guests.—6 periods.

6. **Drawing & needle work** :— Continuation of the previous year's course : handlooms : cotton and jute-weaving : ornamental drawings on scarfs, blouse etc. *Alpanas*—6 periods.

6. **Moral & Religious Education** :— Prayers : modes of prayers : purity of body and mind : devotional songs : *stótras* : *Diniyat* : texts from the Holy Quoran and the Gita : Lives of the Prophet and saints.—3 periods.

**Physical Training** is to be imparted according to a graded series and should include :—

(i) Right posture and walking.

(ii) Running, jumping, marching, balance exercises and exercises of the head, neck, arms and trunk and games with balls, skipping ropes, beanbags etc. (according to **Buchanan system**).

(iii) **Bratachari** action songs : marching songs : *Brata*, *Jhumur* and *Kathi* dances.

---

## CHAPTER VII.

### Union Board.

My readers may ask why I should inflict on them a chapter on Union Boards. The V. S. G. Act is there, the elaborate rules are there and there are the Circle Officers, the Sub-divisional Officers and the District Magistrates to guide them. Why then this waste of time? I do not dispute their arguments, but I cannot help. In my opinion Union Boards still need a great deal more to be said. Besides, in my scheme of rural uplift the Union Boards have to play a very important role indeed, and I have a further weakness to think that I am a specialist in the line. It has been the strongest side of my administration everywhere and somehow or other I feel that I can always manage to make the Union Boards jump in efficiency and do what I like with them. I crave for a little patience with confidence that my readers will not be sorry after having read the Chapter.

I have dealt with the Union Boards of two Sub-divisions, Patuakhali and Sirajganj—the first exceptionally backward and the second considerably, if not exceptionally, advanced. But in both places I found the same

---

story; the Union Boards had not been given sufficient and effective guidance on fundamentals. Splendid inspection notes have been written. Every little detail has been carefully looked into. But very little has been done to see if the rate of union tax has been rightly fixed, if the assessment for works of public need on which the utility of the Boards primarily depends has been sufficient, and if the incidence of taxation is proportionate and equitable to the income of all the assessees.

My experience is that the majority of the Boards do not know how to arrive correctly at the rate—the incidence of taxation for Rs 100/- of income and it is only rarely that the assessment list is fair and equitable. More often than not, the old *chaukidari* tax with slight enhancement continues to be levied, irrespective of whether the income of any particular assessee has dwindled down to 10th or has gone up by 20 times. There is another difficulty and that is the more serious of the two, that the average President and member, is a *pradhan* himself, and is, therefore, very reluctant to go for any change or enhancement as it would, in all probability, touch his own pocket, or in the alternative he is under the obligation of the substantial men of the locality and does not possess the necessary moral courage and stamina to touch the taxes of these substantial men, howsoever disproportionate the taxes they pay might be to their respective income. This state of things is almost universal and chronic and it is this

which presents the great obstacle in the way of proper development of the Union Boards.

Luckily however, the Act has wisely vested the Chief Executive Officer in the District with powers to rectify these inequalities himself after due enquiry if he cannot make the Union Boards do the same. But how many officers take this trouble? It involves unpopularity with those same persons who wield influence and whose voice counts. The poorer classes have little to say. In any case it does not matter.

Coming now to the detailed working of the Boards, I will classify the main function as follows.

(1) To make and collect the statutory assessment under sec. 37 (a) V. S. G. Act and to pay the Chaukidars regularly and punctually and to supervise their duties.

(2) To assess and collect sufficient rates u. s. 37 (b) V. S. G. Act and to spend it in the best interest of the rate-payers.

(3) To administer justice where Bench and Courts have been set up and to keep the records in good order in conformity with the rules.

I will first discuss the statutory obligation mentioned under (1) above and would quote a paragraph from my last years address on the same.

“Let me take up the subject of assessment u. s. 37 (a) and the punctual payment of Chaukidars’ salaries.

---

This, as you already do know, is your statutory obligation and the first charge on Union Board Funds. This obligation must be faithfully discharged. The Chaukider is a very poorly paid officer and if you want to get the best value out of him, you must regularly and punctually pay him too. We all appreciate that the first part of the Bengali year is difficult for collection of taxes, but I am sure it is possible and there are Union Boards who have proved it that taxes in the first quarter can be realised at least from the substantial people and the Chaukider paid punctually. However, thanks are due to our **late Commissioner Mr. Robertson** who has introduced from this year **the Reserve Fund**—a measure which I strongly put forward three years ago for Packerganj, but it was not accepted then. This reserve fund will be a great help and from next year you can have really no excuse whatsoever for defaulting in the punctual payment of the rural police throughout the year.”

But clearly this is not the main function for which the Chaukideri Union was converted into Union Boards. The Boards have a very wide sphere of duties to perform if they are made to realise them and have been vested with sufficient powers and importance. This is what I told them last year in the Union Board Conference.

The conception of the Government has, during

---

the last quarter of a century, undergone considerable change. The states now have to concern and interest themselves with the general and economic welfare of the people very much more than they used to in the past. You also as autonomous and self-governing units can, therefore, no longer identify yourselves with the simple machinery of paying and maintaining rural police or erecting a few bamboo *chars* here and there. It is high time that you took keener interest in the social and economic advancement of your people. You must see how agriculture, still standing where it did 2000 years ago, can be improved and how you can develop your industries. You must look to your educational system and see what is wrong with it and what can be done to give it a new life and impetus. You must pay very much more attention to your sanitation and public health and consider what can be done to improve life in the village. In short, you have now to think of all such measures as are likely to lead to the moral and material advancement of your people."

But it is obvious that all this rhetoric cannot go very far unless the Boards actually assess and collect the funds required for the various needs of the locality. . Even in an advanced Subdivision like Sirajganj the position till last year was anything but satisfactory. The Board assessed only Rs 14000/- u. s. 37 (b) which was 11.9% of that u. s. 37 (a). The amount collected



made the position, worse still. It was only 6·4%. For the sake of example I quote the paragraph dealing with the subject which will also indicate what should be done.

“Let us now examine the position with regard to assessment u. s. 37 (b). The following statements taken from the official report on the working of the Union Boards in the year 1343 B. S. will be instructive.

Assessment.	imposed.	Realised.	Cost of	Net amount
*	*	*	Collection.	available.
U. S. 37 (a)	117374/-	115214/-	8411/-	106803/-
U. S. 37 (b)	14972/-	8000/-	603/-	7397/-

This shows that the percentage of assessment u. s. 37 (b) was 11·3 per cent and the collection 6·4 per cent only. The position will appear worse still when you will learn that the cost of clerical establishment and office expenditure of these Union Boards exceed Rs 14000/-

Gentlemen, please reflect for a moment. Do you realise that the Panchayiti Union was discarded and Union Boards introduced primarily to give you the power to impose taxation u. s. 37 (b) and to develop your locality ? And do you honestly believe that you have made any genuine effort to discharge this great trust that Government has transferred to you ? Excuse me if I say you do not and have not done so yet. You know full well that you can do nothing without money.

You also know and at least you should know that the present union rates are negligibly small to be felt by the people, the incidence of taxation being only fifteen annas per head of a family and that this talk of economic depression and the like, so far as union rates go, is absolute nonsense. But what you lack is courage. You are afraid of courting unpopularity because taxation, howsoever small, is always resented and you do not appreciate that temporary unpopularity is the price that all great workers and genuine lovers of the people must pay. Do please realise that the public do not appreciate the indirect benefit of expenditure under sec. 37 (a) and that if you want to make Union Boards really popular and useful you must assess heavy amounts under sec. 37 (b). The public, sooner or later, will appreciate the benefit they will derive from this assessment and forget to resent it and if you are not found guilty of nepotism you are bound to be far more popular than any of you can be now. The assessment under section 37 (b) should be at least as much as the assessment under section 37 (a) if not twice or thrice more.

Lest you should charge me of mere talking I have tried to set you an example. As you know I have revised the assessment list of each and every Union Board under section 40 V. S. G. Act. It will be useful to reiterate the reasons that have led me to do so.

---

To err is human and you will not, I hope, resent if I say that your assessment lists contained many glaring mistakes. I found instances where the income shown in the assessment list fell far short of the actual income of the assessee and naturally these assessees were highly under-assessed. In many other cases where correct income was shown, the rates imposed were grossly disproportionate. In fact, some Presidents admitted to me frankly that instead of calculating and imposing the rate on the basis of the actual income of the assessee they have calculated and shown the incomes on the basis of taxation made during the Panchayiti Union days.

Obviously this state of things could not be allowed to continue, and after persuasion had failed I had to use my power to the fullest extent to rectify matters. It is possible that some of you might have resented my action, but really you have no reason to do so. It is absolutely my duty to help and guide you in putting your affairs right, if necessary, with the use of that power which the law has for good reasons vested in me. However, the main thing to remember in this connection is, **first**, that union rates should be imposed on the true income of the assessees concerned, and decisions about individual incomes should be arrived at after due local enquiries ; **Secondly**, that the rate of taxation must vary with the difference in income. If an assessee with an income of Rs. 100/- is taxed Re. 1/- i. e. one per cent,

that with the income of Rs. 1000/- must be taxed Rs. 10/- plus, say, ( $\frac{1}{2} \times 10$ ) 5 annas, that with an income of Rs. 2000/- Rs. 20/- plus ( $1 \times 20$ ) Re. 1/4/- that an income of Rs. 3000/- Rs. 30/- plus ( $1\frac{1}{2} \times 30$ ) Rs. 2/13/- that with Rs. 4000/- Rs. 40/- plus ( $2 \times 40$ ) Rs. 5/-, with Rs. 5000/- Rs. 50/- plus ( $2\frac{1}{2} \times 50$ ) Rs. 7/13/- and so on until the limit of Rs. 84/- is reached. And in my opinion this maximum also is definitely low and should be increased to Rs. 150/- at least, say, with the provision that all assessment above Rs. 100/- will be subject to the approval of some higher authority. If you agree with me you may resolve to move the Government. The amendment may have a difficult sailing in the Council, but that is no reason why you should not try if you are convinced of its utility."

It now remains to review the results achieved in consequence of the efforts made during the last 12 months. The following is an extract from the official report submitted to higher authorities on the working of the Boards in the year 1936-37.

"In discussing the general aspect of the working of Union Boards during the year under report, I propose to make a rather bold statement and claim that the Union Boards of the Sirajganj Sub-Division have been very nearly revolutionised during the course of one year and this revolution is not a temporary phase, but has come to stay and develop more and more rapidly

---

on perfectly sound "lines. The Union Boards have been given a new orientation, and though some resentment was felt in the beginning of the year against certain steps taken, almost all the Union Boards have now come to realise that a new life has been put into them which cannot but grow and develop at a rapid pace. To be able to appreciate the significance of these observations it is suggested that the general remarks made in the report of 1936 already quoted be carefully remembered."

The success of U. B. administration depends upon 3 factors. (A) Proper and sufficient assessment u. s. 37 (b). (B) Good collection of taxes within the year. (C) Public spirit amongst the Presidents and members of the Boards.

All these 3 factors have been tackled simultaneously and with conspicuous success. A succession of Sub-Divisional Officers had been requesting the Union Boards to increase the taxation u. s. 37 (b), but to very little effect as the figures will clearly prove. The Presidents and members were unwilling to enhance the taxes, partly for fear of incurring unpopularity and partly for the reason that it would touch their own pocket.

Most of them lacked the moral courage that a public servant should possess. Persuasions failed to convince them as had happened in the past. It was also found that the Boards were miserably ignorant of the

---

rules and methods of assessment and the need of observing fairness and equity in assessing big and small, rich and poor, fairly and equitably according to the means and income of each assessee. To fix a rate on which to calculate the taxes due from each individual was completely foreign to very nearly all of them. The old Chaukideri assessment based on custom and favouritism was being followed everywhere. Hundreds of assessees whose taxes should have been 10 times more than what they paid if their property and circumstances were considered, continued to pay the old chaukideri tax, that is only a fraction of the tax due. My first act, therefore, was to teach the Boards the principle of fixing a rate and calculating the taxes according to rules. But as the assessment list of the year of 1343 B. S. had already been prepared, I had to make simultaneously detailed enquiries about the income and circumstances of the under-assessed and exercise my power u. s. 40 V. S. G. Act, to bring about uniformity to certain extent at least. This yielded an income of about 20 thousand rupees under s. 37 (b) derived exclusively from a few of the under-assessed in each Union Board. The work was done by the C. O.'s who examined the merit of each individual.

As mentioned before, some resentment was felt in the beginning and agitators tried to make capital out of it by giving it a communal colour. Statistics have since been compiled and prove that quite apart from the fact

that communal considerations had never crossed my thoughts in this matter, the distribution of the assesses effected is 46% Mahomedans and 36% Hindus which is impossible to help since the proportion of substantial persons amongst the two communities is not uniform. And it should be noted that this has affected only a very small fraction of the total number of assesses. Luckily there is no resentment at present, as it was bound to be dispelled, having no legs to stand upon.

The following figures have been given for the sake of comparison between the position in 1342 and 1343.

1342 B. S.	1343 B. S.
Assessment u. s. 37 (a) 117,374/-	131,838/- (Increase due to reserve fund)
„ „ 37 (b) 14,972/-	34,458/-
Total demand including arrear of previous year 118,310/-	133,142/-
„ 25,865/-	42,237/-
Total expenditure on works of public utility. 22,335/-	37,031/-

The figures speak for themselves and I have only to add that the figures of 1344 B. S. will show a further substantial improvement without my direct interference. The ball has been set rolling with sufficient momentum to continue its progress for a pretty long time.

---

**COLLECTION.**

In spite of the fact that enhancement of taxes u. s. 40 V. S. G. was resented by a large body of tax payers in the beginning, the collection of rates has been markedly satisfactory. 32 Boards effected cent per cent collection as against 17 in the year preceding and it is noteworthy that in spite of a severe epidemic of small pox, and cholera in Shahzadpur, 9 Boards of that circle effected cent per cent collection as against 1 in the year preceding. The number of Boards effecting cent per cent collection in 1342 and 1343 B. S. is given below ;

1342 B. S.

1343 B. S.

16

32

It will appear that the Boards of the Shahzadpur circle have shown marked improvement and for this, not only the Boards but also Mavlvi Abdul Hye, C. O., are entitled to a most well-earned and well-deserved credit.

The total collection in the two years under sec. 37 (a) and 37 (b) including arrears is as follows :—

1342 B. S.

1343 B.S.

S. 37 (a) 115,701/-

131,926/-

S. 37 (b) 14,064/-

33,106/-

The percentage of collection for the whole subdivision has been 90% in 1342 B. S. and 96% in 1343 B. S.

One of the most important steps that have influenced the working of the Boards has been the introduction



---

of a definite scheme of classification of Union Boards. In previous years Boards were never classified in some circles and where attempt was made to do so, it was done haphazardly without any definite system and without any criterion for standard.

I, therefore, prepared an elaborate plan of classification which left no room for any favouritism and on the basis of which the Boards, so to say, can classify themselves. This scheme has introduced a spirit of competition for a high position not only in each thana and circle but also in the whole subdivision. "I have no hesitation" in saying that it has effected very considerable improvement and has given a powerful stimulus to the Union Boards of the subdivision. The scheme is attached as Appendix IV.

Out of the several minor improvements effected, the detailed instruction regarding preparation of Budget and the allotment of funds in equal proportion on the 3 important Budget heads, namely, (1) water supply, (2) Education, (3) Roads, may be mentioned. The allotment used to be very disproportionate; but this year the budgets have been very carefully scrutinised and controlled and it is expected that all the 3 heads will be properly served.

A new **Register** recording date of receipt and date of submission of report in criminal enquiries referred to the Presidents, Union Boards, has been introduced and

---

maps on 4" to a mile scale with a suitable list of symbols have been obtained from D. L. R's office and prepared for every Union Board of the Subdivision.

The number of Benches and Courts remained the same as in the preceding year, that is, 16. It has, however, been proposed and all the Union Boards were informed that unless specially adverse circumstances exist all the A class Boards will be vested with Bench and Court powers and I hope higher authorities will agree with me that Bench and Court powers should be the rule and not the exception as seems to have been the policy followed so far. Benches and Courts save the rural population from running into the net of pleaders and Mukhtears and at the same time bring considerable amount of money to the Union Board which can be utilised for useful work. The step proposed to be taken is perfectly logical and will meet a very legitimate and natural demand of the good Boards of this subdivision.

The last thing that I propose to mention is the relation between Rural Development and Union Boards. Considerable amount of good work has been done by the Rural Development Societies, of whom the members of the Union Boards are ex-officio members and the President of Union Boards is the President. Hundreds of miles road work has been done by these societies without incurring any expense. A good deal of jungle-cutting, water hyacinth clearance and other sanitary

---

measures have been taken and **no less than 1500 night schools have been started.** It is desirable that this work be recognised and connected with the efficiency of Union Boards and for this reason a certain number of marks has been allotted to this item in the classification scheme already mentioned. I understand that Government are contemplating to prepare a scheme of classification for the whole province. It is my earnest hope that the scheme prepared by me would be given the fullest consideration. Not a single item can be treated lightly or excluded, even though there will always remain room for improvement. I close this report with the words that I feel proud of the Boards of my Subdivision."

A few points more still remain to be discussed. In the chapter on Adult Education I had proposed that every night school should get a grant of **Rs 2/-** p. m. from the Union Board and I would like to explain how it can be provided. The 78 Union Boards of Sirajganj spent **Rs 4706/-** only on education in 1935-36. This gives an average of **Rs 60/-** per Board. **In the year 1936-37 the Boards spent Rs. 7785/- which was nearly double of that spent in the previous year.** This figure should have been very much higher but for the fact that the enhancement u. s. 40 V. S. G. Act was made after budgets had been prepared and there were lots of uncertainties and anomalies which the Union Boards could not grasp quickly. The bud-

---

get instructions were issued late and the Boards could not give the retrospective effect.

The situation in 1937-38 would, however, be quite different. The Boards have budgeted on an average about Rs 200/- per Board and in the year following, I should have no difficulty in getting an allotment of Rs 300/- per Board which would mean about Rs 25000/- for the whole Subdivision.

I have further in mind to vest the majority of the Boards with Bench and Court powers if I may and this would yield an additional income of Rs 200/- per Board making a total of Rs 500/- per Board or Rs 39000/- for the whole Subdivision.

It is found that on an average, there are 20 villages in each Union and there is an equal number of night schools. If the Boards make a grant of Rs 2/- p. m. per night school they will be quite within their means.

And what has been possible to do for Sirajganj will be found possible all over the province, at least in East Bengal. All that is required is to issue definite and clear instructions to the Executive Officers and Circle Officers to see that no Board should get Bench and Court powers or District Board grant until it undertakes to spend Rs 500/- on education. The rest will be collected by Mushtibhiksha by villagers themselves

---

and the State will have no necessity for spending anything whatsoever from the public exchequer.

But it is possible that some Boards where the Bhadrалоkes have a majority may refuse to comply. Such Boards, in nine cases out of ten, will be found torn to pieces by internal factions and will be in a hopeless mess. Only a spirit of indiscipline which is sometimes mistakenly called "Independence" will be conspicuous. The Executive Officers must be empowered to deal with such cases and should for this purpose be given at least concurrent control with the District Board over Part II of the Budget subject to final approval by the Board in cases of dispute. There is nothing anti-democratic in such a step. It will only act as an antidote to the vagaries of a bureaucracy which has been given power without the necessary public spirit or sense of responsibility. It will save the money of the poor rate-payers from being thoroughly misused and often converted to the advantages of individual members. Instances are not wanting, but it is not necessary to quote.

Apart from this it should be clearly kept in mind that the present Executive is a public servant in every sense of the word. He is merely an agent to carry out the policy of a popular Government and draws all his executive authority from that source. Government can, therefore, always interfere and pull

---

back any one who tried to go too far. After all, Self-Government does not mean license. Every constitution has a saving clause and this would be nothing extraordinary. Man in civilised countries is not so independent as the enthusiasts may think. Even his own life is not always his own property, not to speak of public funds. The Penal Code is there to punish every attempt to commit suicide.

The very wise and useful provision for nomination of members to the local bodies at least for another 10 years until sense of public responsibility grows stronger, should also be considered in the same spirit. The conflict between Government and the public has ceased to exist. The Government is no more so distinct from the public as it might have been the case before the new Constitution came into force. Every attempt to weaken the hands of the Executive, who, as already pointed out, are no more than agents of the popular Government, will merely weaken the Government itself. Parties in local bodies will have leaning to the various political groups in the country. The Government whether they be a Government of the right wing or of the left, will have tremendous difficulties in executing their plans if the Executive is not well-equipped. Things have considerably changed. Theory and practice cannot always run parallel and a few kinks, here and there, will be found very useful in the long run. Any hasty decision may have to be repented.

---

To recapitulate I suggest that the experience gained at Sirajganj, should be communicated to other Officers in the province, with definite and clear instructions to ensure that inequalities and injustices in the assessment lists are not allowed to continue any longer and that they are removed by the Boards themselves where possible, failing that by action v. s. 40 V. S. G. Act.

A Circle Officer for every 8 Unions should be provided—a subject I propose to discuss at length in a subsequent Chapter.

The tax limit of Rs. 84/- should be increased at least to Rs 150/-. I know cases where the whole Union belongs to one person and there are scores whose incomes from the Union may be Rs 25000/- or so. If the rate be Re. 1/- per 100/-, will it be fair to tax a man with an income of Rs 8400/- and another with an income of Rs 25000/- to the same maximum of Rs 84/- ?

Sub-Divisional Officers and Circle Officers should be given concurrent control with District Board on part II of the Union Board budget subject to final decision of the Board in cases of disputes. Union Boards should be induced to have at least 50% taxation v. s. 37 (b) to that v. s. 37 (a) and classification scheme provincialised to encourage them. Union Boards should be freely vested with Bench and Court powers with

---

clear instructions that the income derived from the Bench and Court will be spent exclusively on Adult Education, and over and above that, the Board will provide at least Rs 300/- more for the same purpose being in no case less than  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the total assessment u. s. 37 (b). The remaining two-thirds should go to **water supply & communication and drainage**, the last two items to be taken up in consultation with Rural Development workers which I will discuss in the next Chapter. I think I have said enough. I close this chapter with the remarks that the majority of the Boards are composed of very sensible and very good-natured men and I am sure that what I have proposed, can be introduced easily all over the province if the will to do so is sufficiently strong and if the move is made in the right way.

---



## CHAPTER VIII.

# Rural Development

( GENERAL. )

### SECTION I.

Something of Rural Development as I understand it has been mentioned in the concluding paragraph of the first Chapter. In the pages that follow I will briefly trace the history of the movement since it has been launched in Sirajganj, followed by its **aims and objects, programme, organisation, finance** and other connected topics.

The idea of starting a Rural Development movement in Sirajganj took formal shape in the U. Board and Rural Development Conference held in October, 1936. Before calling the Conference I had issued an elaborate questionnaire to the leading men of the Sub-division with a view to consult and know what in their opinion the country needed for an allround improvement. My findings were embodied in four elaborate addresses of which one was devoted exclusively to Rural

---

Development. These addresses are in print offering enough food for reflection and I will quote freely from them where necessary.

A certain amount of preliminary work for selecting the R. D. workers had already been done in consultation with local officers and immediately **Village Committees, Union Societies, Thana Associations** were set up in all police stations and linked up with a **Central Organisation at headquarters** which took the name **R. D. Council, Sirajganj**. The delegates took up the idea with keen enthusiasm and started work forthwith. But it was impossible to anticipate and explain in a short address every little detail and all the difficulties that were likely to arise. So a series of R. D. Circulars was issued and widely published. A weekly newspaper entitled **the Palli-pradip** was simultaneously set up with aims and objects which may profitably be quoted here.

“It is our sincere desire to contribute our best towards an allround improvement of the subdivision systematically and methodically. Knowledge and thoughts are the essential pre-requisites of organised activity, and so before our desire can be translated into action it is necessary that a medium should be created through which our views and ideas and those of others willing to join hands with us can be carried into every nook and corner of the country. The value and importance

---

of constructive propaganda cannot be over-estimated. Hence the need to bring into existence a weekly organ.

### ITS POLICY, AIMS AND OBJECTS :

This will be a non-political, non-party, non-communal, and non-sectarian paper devoted exclusively to the cause of the welfare of the country and its people and in particular to the development amongst them of a sense of self-help, self-reliance and co-operative effort in tackling and solving their common problems. The paper will strive to awaken the latent powers and potentialities of the people and thus try to infuse a new vitality. It will put forward constructive schemes and suggestions for the improvement of the economic system, and in particular, explain and propagate the basic principles of the Rural Credit Societies and the Co-operative Movement. It will guide the people in the improvement of agriculture and cattle, in the expansion of cottage industries, in the better administration of their local self-governing institutions and in the better appreciation and up-keep of their schools and Maktabas. It will discuss on a broad basis what is good and what is bad in their social system and what views about State and Government they should hold and what they should not. Last, but not the least in importance, will be its duty to propagate the principles

---

of health and hygiene, the up-keep of homes and the sanitary planning of villages, the way to fight the pests and improve the drainage of each locality by intelligently studying the situation and by carefully co-ordinating voluntary efforts. In short, it will try to infuse more life, more light and still more light into them and thus to lead them to build better men, better homes and better countrysides."

• Thus the movement has slowly and gradually developed and has now reached every village and every nook and corner of the subdivision. It can already claim about 2,000 night schools with not less than 60,000 to 70,000 adults attending them, a few hundred girls' and boys' schools, 15 new M. E. schools each with 10 Bigbas of land for play-ground and agricultural farms, about 500 miles of road work, scores of khals and tanks, considerable amount of jungle and water-hyacinth clearance, 7 or 8 Weaving Factory schools, 21 Agricultural Demonstration Farms and many other things, all executed and carried on by voluntary effort. But it is not these results that are the brightest side of the movement. It is the new conception of life—the new ideal of self-help and self-reliance, the new spirit of self-dependence, the new man amongst the villagers that fascinates me. I see in them signs of a new life, a new vigour, a new vitality and an entirely new strength of self-confidence. It is these signs that I look for and look upon as the greatest

---

achievement of the Rural Development movement and not the statistics of schools, roads and khāls. Long live this new fire that has kindled their hearts. Everything else will follow.

The spirit and the aims and objects were set forth in the same address.

“Do not we call ourselves human beings and do not we boast of being gifted with intellect and talents ? If so, do we really and sincerely realise that to serve humanity is our duty ? Consonant with what every individual owes to himself and his immediate dependants, first and foremost, should not we serve others also, our neighbours and countrymen not endowed with the same intellect and sense of responsibilities as ourselves ? Should not we educate them, help them and guide them to lead a better and happier life ? Cannot we do so ? Yes, most certainly and definitely and we must. But before we proceed we have to search in our heart of hearts for those essential qualities which go to translate such a desire into reality. What are these qualities ? Strong feelings with a burning desire to achieve what you want to, an irresistible sincerity of purpose and a persistent and active enthusiasm, a dogged determination with an indomitable patience and perseverance, a spirit of sacrifice that will rise above all considerations of personal gain and public applause, and last of all, a most scrupulous regard for honesty and

---

fair-mindedness in all public matters. These are, gentlemen, in my order of things, the minimum qualifications of a real worker."

"Educate your people, both young and old, teach them the principles of health and hygiene by work and example, and clear away jungles and pests to save thousands of lives from poverty, disease and snakes. Fill, excavate and connect Dobas and ditches as necessary, to drain off dirt and filth and remove the home of diseases. Examine carefully and work to make every village of Sirajganj a model of perfect sanitation and drainage.

Find your play grounds, find your village halls, find your libraries and open night schools to educate your people. Then and then only you will be able to stand proudly to say that you are real patriots and know how to serve your nation and country.

All this is not a dream. It is a practical possibility. There is no dearth of materials. What you need is the sincerity of purpose to work, the grim determination to achieve and the power of organisation and personal magnetism which, without exception, every selfless, sincere and honest worker must find inherent in himself.

Let us help ourselves and Gold will help us.

The programme also will be, quoted from the same address.

---

“ Let us now discuss what **programme of work** our R. D. organisation can take up. There are scores of things which may be handled, but it will not be wise to undertake responsibilities that may prove too heavy. For instance, we cannot do much to ease the economic situation nor can we proceed very far with improvement of agriculture and other industries, all of which need large funds. This we may leave to our Union Boards and the central organisation who will be better fitted to take up these items though there can be no objection if we, depending on our own voluntary resources, set up agricultural Farms and weaving schools as planned out from the parent organisation. But even when we leave that aside, there will be plenty of constructive schemes to handle, if we have the will to work. I think the following problems will provide the best and most useful field to apply our energy effectively to :—

1. Public health.

- (a) Health propaganda and social reform.
- (b) Improvement of village drainage and sanitation.
- (c) Remodelling of the village home.
- (d) Removal of jungles and other pests.

2. (a) Organisation of village sports and recreation grounds.

- (b) Development of clubs and club-life.

3. Adult Mass Education.

The first will build a healthier people, a better

---

house, and a better village; the second, a better society, and the third, a better and a more enlightened nation, an ideal programme, which, in my opinion, is sufficiently ambitious to attract and satisfy the keenness of even the most enthusiastic of the workers. As to how we should proceed in each case, it is a matter of detail to be worked out later and I cannot but make the briefest mention here.

Health propaganda should be carried on by lectures and demonstrations, helped by hand-bills and booklets to be issued by the Central Executive Council. Magic lanterns should also be used in consultation with the health staff.

Every Village Committee should prepare its rough sketch-map of the village and study its drainage system on the lines suggested in the note of Mr. Moazzem Hossain, District Engineer, Pabna, and attached herewith as Appendix V. Then workable schemes for filling up or connecting unhealthy ditches to the nearest khal or river, excavation of tanks and khals, where necessary, for clearing unhealthy jungles and pests should be thoughtfully prepared and executed by voluntary labour.

A new model of village home which will allow sufficient light and air should be introduced and, where possible, attempt to remodel the whole village should be made.

Similarly the common need and requirements of



---

each village should be provided, play-ground created and sports organised.

Defects in the prevailing social system should be attacked both by word and example and a sense of civic responsibility, and joint efforts and a spirit of liberal-mindedness and mutual toleration developed. Common clubs, not sectional clubs, should be founded, a matter on which I cannot help making a few remarks. This unfortunate country of ours, divided into so many castes and creeds as it is, needs the development of a healthy common club-life more than does any other country in the world. Not only the ill-fed and ill-clad peasantry need a place where they can sit together and laugh out the day's drudgery, but also the various interests and classes, the land-lord and tenants, the creditor and the debtor, and the Hindu and the Muslim must meet together on terms of equal footing and in an atmosphere of complete freedom to shake off that hidden and secret feeling of dread or hatred which most of them possess in the secret corner of their hearts. I go a step further and say that all this talk of Hindu-Muslim unity and all this fuss of untouchability has little chance to materialise until India makes up her mind to develop a healthy common club-life. It is never too late to begin a good thing and nothing is too difficult for those who have a mind and the will to work.

---

The first thing you need is a **Hall**. Where possible, do build your **village hall** by voluntary subscription and voluntary labour. But perhaps India is too poor to afford costly separate halls for every village. They should be constructed with subscribed bamboo posts and straw sheds by voluntary effort. Apart from that, in most cases you already possess one, if you begin to look at your village school from a new angle of vision. India can ill afford to waste her school houses for 18 hours of the day. **The village school should be a Girls' School in the morning, 7 A. M. to 10 A. M., a Boys' School in the day, 11 A. M. to 4 P. M. and an Adult School and Social Club in the evening.** The school building should become the centre of all social activity, the most important and attractive spot in the village,—a badly needed and long-desired change of attitude towards the school which will incidentally lead to its improvement and development.”

The problem of adult education has already been discussed at length in a separate chapter. It will be enough to mention here that a night school is to be started in every village without exception, be it big or small, and every male member induced and compelled to attend. The night school house should be built in an open airy site as nearly in the centre of the village as possible and no other material than subscribed bamboos and straw is to be used in its construction. Its necessary source of income will be two—the Mushti

---

Bhiksha and the Union Board grant of Rs 2/- per month. The total will come to Rs 5/- or so and any teacher will be glad to work at this remuneration. Other details will be discussed along with the duties of the R. D. worker.

## SECTION II.

### The Organisation.

A workable organisation composed of devoted workers is the key to the success of every movement. But while to set up a well thought-out system is a comparatively simple task, to select the right sort of workers inspired with the same ideal and pulsating with vigour, and energy and burning with enthusiasm for the common cause is a tremendously more difficult matter. It requires hard work and a keen insight into human character. Besides, the material is almost always raw and it has to be converted and latent faculties aroused and developed. And yet without this, the machinery cannot function as a well-knit unity.

The unit of R. D. organisation set up in Sirajganj is the **Village Committee**—composed of 25 workers under a **Captain Secretary**. The Captain Secretary in turn together with the 9 members of the Union Board forms **The Union Society**. The President of the U. Bd. is to act as **ex-officio President** of the Union Society and

---

• the **Secretary** and an **Assistant Secretary** are to be elected from amongst the Captain Secretaries. Thus three office-bearers represent the Union on the **Thana Committee**. The Thana Officer, the S. R. if any, the Inspector of Co-operative Societies if any, the Head master of the local H. E. and M. E. School and the C. O. where there is one, will be additional and ex-officio members of the Thana Association. They would elect their own President, and Vice-President, a Thana Secretary and a Joint Secretary from every set of 3 contiguous and adjoining Unions excluding those three which will be directly under the Thana Secretary. The Secretary and the Joint Secretaries are invariably to be elected from amongst the Union Secretaries and will each be held responsible for work done in the three Unions they represent and which are placed under their charge.

The President and the Vice-President, the Thana Secretary and the joint Secretaries plus workers to be selected by the S. D. O. from the town will form the general body of the R. D. Council at headquarters. The S. D. O. will be the ex-officio President and would select members from the town on the following basis :—

(1) 6 or 7 officials including C. O's, the chief Police Officer and such others as may be interested in the movement.

(2) 7 or 8 non-official members to take charge of various departments.

(3) As many members as there are Thanas to be in

charge of the various Thanas on behalf of the Council (8 or 9).

(4) 5 to 10 supporters and sympathisers.

This organisation though a little elaborate, is very nearly the best that I have been able to set up. It is the result of extensive experience even though this experience is barely a year old. In the early stages R. D. Societies, independent of Union Boards, were formed and though every society included energetic members of the Union Boards, a certain amount of apathy due to jealousy soon became apparent and I had, therefore, to modify the organisation to meet these changed circumstances. But I do not think I shall have to make any further changes in the constitution.

The persons to be nominated by the S. D. O. under the 4 heads need some comments. The C. O.'s and one or two Dy. Magts. will always be helpful in carrying on the work in the absence of the S. D. O. Members under the second head will be non-officials and will have to be the very best and the most outstanding R. D. workers available—the pillars, and honour should always be conferred on the most tried and dependable enthusiasts. In Sirajganj the various portfolios have been distributed as follows :—

1. Member-in-charge of Organisation.
5. " " " " " Adult Education
3. " " " " " Secondary Education
2. " " " " " Primary Education
4. " " " " " Female Education
6. " " " " " Training of Primary School Teachers.
7. " " " " " Agricultural Improvement
8. " " " " " Industrial Development
9. " " " " " Health Propaganda.

---

Men under the 3rd head would have no definite portfolio but will have charge of a P. S, and will be expected to run to their respective Thanas for propaganda or settling disputes wherever necessary. These men will be 2nd in grade as compared to the members-in-charge and may be raised to the 1st grade if and when they deserve and desire. Members under the 4th head will be comparatively lower still in the ladder—those who cannot afford to devote much time & energy but volunteer occasional services for inspection and propaganda work in the interior. They also can be pushed up when occasion arises.

But, as I mentioned, all this is simple. The real thing is the selection of the best workers.

The following quotations will show how the workers were selected.

“Ever since I took over charge of this subdivision I have been keenly feeling the need and looking round to pick up from amongst the local people, the type of public man and worker who would conform to certain ideals and standards and whom I could unite into one body of genuine and ideal men. No man can be perfect and I do not claim to be an exception nor do I expect others to be. But there are certain essential qualities, the bare minimum, that we must possess and look for in others. A selfless worker must possess strong feelings and desire to be of service to others.

---

You must not only feel but feel strongly enough to be moved to positive action. Your feelings have no value except in relation to the activity they promote. You must feel and act and awaken in yourself and others the necessary will to achieve the desired object. This spirit must be created. It is mostly for this reason that I propose to make it a condition, for every one who wants to join and work with me, to swear to himself before us all that he will remain true to these principles, and I do not think I need any apology. The first and most important thing I am anxious for is to build up the character of my workers. If I succeed, the first important step will have been taken. Come forward, one by one, and swear that you will live and strive to live up to the ideals which I have placed before you. I will give each of you an enframed piece of paper on which you will find the following inscription.

“I most sincerely promise to myself and others in the presence of my fellow members and workers and swear **on my word of honour** that henceforth I will strive for and remain scrupulously **honest to public interest and public property, sincere** in my mission to render **constructive service** to my fellow beings to the best of my ability, work actively and steadily for **the common good**, with that burning zeal, that will never end and will give me no peace except in work, with that **determination which will never flinch**, and

---

with that stout perseverance which will and must overcome all obstacles. Remember "Life is a battle and not victory." This inscription has some meaning and purpose. It will be a constant reminder to your promise and you are advised to take it home and place it in a prominent place in your house so that you may look at it every now and then. Before long you will find that it has some effects."

• About 2500 workers in Sirajganj have sworn this oath and though I cannot say it had had its full effect, I am not prepared to admit that it went waste. Rome was not built in a day and a nation cannot be lifted in the course of a few months or years. But every step in the right direction counts and has its effect in the long run. The world may laugh if it likes. I am quite happy with what has been done.

A good many of those who were attracted by the glamour of fame have since dropped out. This was inevitable. But happily an enormous number of new adherents have come into the fold. The results have surprised and rejuvenated even some of the most sceptic old bones. The Council and the various subordinate organisations are being re-organised and the new lot will be composed of a far superior stuff — those only who have passed through the hard test of one year's selfless service. The future is hopeful and bright. But a very powerful dynamo will be required



---

to work up the machine continuously for some time before it can be left to look after itself.

### SECTION III.

#### Finance.

I am receiving queries every day how the whole thing is being financed. As I have already mentioned some-where before, given a sufficiently strong will and imagination, funds should never stand in the way. They simply follow. All that you need is to know your requirements, your resources and how to tap them. In any case the R. D. programme proper is based on **self-help**. This is the advice I gave to my workers.

“Let me give you a timely warning. You will get no reward and no remuneration for your services. You must clearly understand that neither your central body nor even the Government itself will possibly be in a position to finance this extensive programme of village reconstruction. The central body will do its best to help and guide you in every difficult matter. But they will have very little funds, if any, at their disposal. The Government which you should learn to call your own, are doing their level best to provide rural areas with as much fund as is possible and practicable for them. But your Government, and for the

---

matter of that, no Government in the world, can at one time, meet all the one hundred and one requirements of every part of the country. It will require years. As intelligent men, you must realise and appreciate this hard fact and must not waste your energies in thinking all the time that Government will or should do everything for you or that they are not doing enough. It will take away your mind from construction to destruction which would be suicidal.

Bengal has already suffered enough and wasted enough energy and fund in pursuing this ill-conceived and misdirected line of thought. You will get nothing by this perverted mentality. You must, if you have any sense of real heroism and patriotism, start to build and construct with the resources and materials available rather than follow the futile policy of destruction. You must learn to stand on your own legs and begin to help yourself. You will find that it is not impossible to achieve what you want to. There may be difficulties and there will be, but I refuse to believe that they would be beyond your power to surmount. There will be no dearth of men to volunteer their services and work with you for a common cause and there will be no dearth of money either, to meet your reasonable common needs." But for the benefit of those who would still insist being inquisitive I will give the details. Agricultural Farms have to be financed by the Co-operative Banks, Dist. Boards and the U. Boards if

---

necessary; Industrial Factory Schools by raising share capital; Training camps for gurus by the Dist. School Board or where they do not exist, by the D. Bds. and Union Bds.; Night Schools by U. Bds. and Musti Bhiksha raised by the volunteers of the village committee guided and supervised by their Captain Secretary. Jungle-cutting, waterhyacinth clearance, and other sanitary measures, and excavation of khals and tanks will not require funds except for big projects. They require spirit and organisation.

The same applies to Communication, but it will be very helpful if the Union Secretary and Asst. Secretary are informally consulted by the U. Bd. before road programme is taken up. If the organisation works really well, it will be quite unnecessary for the Board to employ labour except in very special cases. The work can be done by the village committees of the respective villages under the leadership of the Union and Captain Secretaries. The money thus saved may be distributed to the committees concerned for such needs as books, mats and other necessities of the schools. A portion may, of course, be spent on a little sweets to be distributed to members actually working.

Similarly the U. Board should consult the Union and Asst. Secretary at the time of making grants to the night schools. Incidentally this will give the R. D. workers a sense of importance and prestige and would

---

be a legitimate recognition of their selfless services. Girls' and boys' Primary schools also have been opened because there is noticeable influx of new boys who sat idle at home so long. It is high time that the State took complete charge of financing the Primary Schools exclusively from its own funds leaving the U. Board allotment for education entirely at the disposal of the organisers of the night schools. The education of adults will thus become an independent department to be controlled and financed by the U. Bd. and the Union R. D. Secretaries. This would be another step helpful in stabilising the movement.

## SECTION IV.

### Amusements.

Life in the villages is at least dull if not positively unhappy. The simple folks, no doubt, do have an occasional fit of enjoyment when they have leisure and energy. An occasional boat race on the way to the ha't during the rains, an outburst of village balads and laughter during the dry months, a jovial observance of country festivals are certainly noticed here and there. But they are very rare. Foot-ball is, of course, slowly entering into the interior, but for most of the villages it is too much of a luxury to afford and is, therefore,

---

exclusively limited to the upper middle class areas. Besides, the football season does not last very long and it does not touch the majority of the people who are too tired and worn-out after a hard day's labour. They require not so much exercise as mental recreation. Jazz music is what they actually need.

The night schools that are proposed to be set up are going to put a further strain on the nerves, unless of course the subject matter is treated in the simplest and most humorous fashion as I have desired it to be. But this may not always be possible. In every case the work will demand concentration and attention and would none the less tax the wearied nerves. How to counteract this and incidentally make the school livelier and happier ?

A wireless set would be the ideal, but for the present it is too expensive. A gramophone machine with a set of records of instructive musical compositions is, therefore, a remedy. An ordinary machine can be had now-a-days for Rs 25/- a piece. If some philanthropic business men could set up a national factory for turning out state gramophones at a low margin of profit, I am confident a machine will not cost more than Rs 20/-. Records containing either music and instructive speeches or instructive and vigorous music on both sides could be turned out at -/8/- a piece. One machine and a set of 10 records, all marked "State", with private possession

---

prohibited and made an offence as in the case of the Army rifles, could be provided to each night school. The total cost, say for a district like Pabna, will amount to about Rs 90,000/-. This is not, after all, such a terribly big amount as to be prohibitive. The D. B. can afford this sum, if they like, conveniently by spreading the scheme over 3 years. It would make not only the night schools more pleasant, useful and inviting, but the whole village happier and delighted. Every record will provide a new source of joy — a rare luxury — for the common villagers of Bengal. The old school, I have no doubt, will laugh at it and ridicule the whole idea. Their most patent argument would be "Let us give drinking water first." I do not like to dispute this dictum as it stands. But I am prepared to take the responsibility and say that a little more education, a little more knowledge of health and hygiene and a little more joy and thrill in life will, in the long run, prove a far stronger bulwark against the ravages of disease than a few more wells and tanks.

**The Bratachari movement** will also be of some use as a source of enjoyment and I hope to give it a fair trial. But with due respect to its great founder I must confess frankly that, as far as I have seen, very little attempt has been made to put its utilitarian ideals into practice. It is limited to school children only, and is treated as an additional item of school sports. But there again, I must say that some of the dances and

cries strike me as positively inartistic — things which the supreme artist in the nation's subconscious mind had rejected long ago by the natural process of elimination. They may be good as exercises, but they are not pretty to look at. Conception will, of course, differ and others may have different views. I am only putting down my own personal impressions.

But I admit at the same time, that the music and the songs and some of the dances, particularly the **Kathi dance** are very pretty indeed. **The songs combining Hindu and Muslim ideals, the welcome, the water-hyacinth clearance and some other times are very praiseworthy and deserve to be popularised all over the country. These items of the Bratachari movement will be included as a part of the R. D. programme, to help in the co-ordination and synthesis of the seemingly disruptive forces in the society.**

Before I close this section I hasten to admit that not being a Bratachari myself my knowledge of the subject is very meagre. So I apologise to my senior Mr. Dutt if I have made any ill-founded remarks. I am encouraging the movement particularly for primary school children for whom I believe it to be an attractive and useful substitute of the Boy Scout. \*

---

\* Apart from certain poses in some of the dances, specially the Raibeshe which the author terms inartistic as being o'd and naturally eliminated in process of time, he has envisaged, from what he has seen of the demonstrations at Sirajganj, great possibilities of a national regeneration. Space does not allow of

---

## SECTION V. .

### Inspection and Encouragement.

Such a vast programme of work as the R. D. movement contemplates cannot possibly be executed without a continuous and living source of encouragement and inspiration. The Captain Secretaries and other R. D. workers have to be kept at a certain pitch of enthusiasm which means frequent lectures, inspection and issue of posters. In the following pages I will deal with these few items.

---

quotations from the valued opinions of **Sir Francis Younghusband, Dr. Rabindranath, Sir S. Radhakrishnan** and a host others of international fame. Alongside of the author's views it is pertinent to quote here a few lines from a recent speech (re-iterated very recently by the **Hon'ble Nawab Mahdi Yar Jung, Vice-Chancellor, Osmania, University at Hyderabad** where Mr. G. S. Dutt with his party was invited to give a demonstration, Oct. 1937) delivered by the **Rt. Hon'ble Sir Akbar Hyderi, Chief Minister of Hyderabad**, at the Sixth All-Bengal Bratachari Training Camp, Dúm-Dum, on 27th. December, 1936.

"... Today I see what Bengal is doing in order to strengthen the physique and the moral stature of the Indian people along lines which, I must say and can truly say, will really lead to a permanent national regeneration, because Mr. Dutt and his colleagues have tried to discover what has been handed down in our villages from times past and have shown how these should be adopted for our needs, for the needs of our students and for the needs of reviving the intellectual, spiritual and cultural life to which we were used in our past. ... I wish and pray that this movement may grow and grow until it spreads throughout the whole land of our Bharatmata and brings about that unity for which we are all, longing, namely a country with one people and with one mind."

—Publisher.



The Executive head of a Subdivision should arrange a programme of mass meeting to be held at least once a year in every Union and encourage the workers by inspecting one or two items of the works and joining hands with the local workers wherever possible. This will drag in the upper classes of society and enhance the dignity of labour. The C. O.'s should hold three or four, if not more, and should do the same. But even this will not do. Rural Development days and weeks should be organised at least 3 to 4 times every year, and the services of all the touring officers e. g. C. O.'s, Police Officers, Co-operative stuff, Sanitary Inspectors and others of the Health Dept. stuff should be requisitioned. The Special Officers for Debt Settlement, the S. I.'s of Schools and the S. R.'s, about whose future existence I am sceptic — a subject I shall deal with in the next Chapter, should also be utilised as long as they continue. The services of the staff of H. E. and M. E. schools and Junior Madrasahs should also be asked for. These institutions should each provide at least two enthusiasts—men with personality and power of speech — whose services can be utilised. Over and above this, local Mukhtears & Pleaders, willing to co-operate, should also be asked to go out in the interior, hold mass meetings, inspect schools and actually join hands in the works. They should be provided with R. D. diaries to keep notes in of what they saw and did in unions and villages visited.

The Thana Secretaries and Joint and Union Secretaries should likewise be provided with R. D. diaries for recording notes of their inspections. The Captain Secretaries also should similarly keep notes of the work done in their respective villages. Frequent posters and R. D. Circulars, as have been actually issued in Sirajganj, should be published and carried to every Captain and Union Secretary through the Thana Officers, Chaudhiders and Daffaders. A complete list of the Captain Secretaries and other R. D. workers should be kept, Union by Union, at each Thana. The Union Board would obviously be part and, for the matter of that, the most important part of the Union Society. But as the Captain and other Secretary will have some independent position, every care should be taken to show the most scrupulous regard to the Union Boards lest they should feel overshadowed and start getting jealous. On the contrary, the members should be encouraged to have concurrent powers and jurisdiction over the Captain Secretaries in their wards and should be requested to see that work goes on smoothly for which they get as much credit as any one else. If this precaution is taken, no difficulty will arise. The Boards must also be kept informed of changes and of everything else to be done in their jurisdiction.

So much about inspection. Now I come to **recognition and rewards** — the very spurs to activity. I

propose the following items and this is what we have actually arranged at Sirajganj.

1. A **special badge** has been prepared for every R. D. worker not below the rank of Captain Secretary. This design reflects the programme of the movement and 3000 badges have been ordered for.

2. There will be a **challenge cup** for the best village Committee in every Union. A **medal** to be retained will be given to the best Captain Secretary.

3. There will be a **challenge shield** for the best village in every Thana.

4. There will be **one big-sized, challenge shield** for the best village in the whole Subdivision.

5. There will be two **medals**, one for the best Union Secretary and one for the best Union President ( R. D. work ) in every thana.

6. **3 Medals** for the best three Thana or joint Secretaries in the Subdivision.

7. **3 Medals** for the best Thana Presidents in the Subdivision.

8. **6 Medals** for the best members-in-charge of definite departments or Thanas in the R. D. Council.

The cups and medals for Captain Secretaries have been subscribed by U. Boards, the Thana shields by donors and the rest by the Council. The basis of decision and the judges would be as follows :—

Captain Secretaries are expected to keep records in their diary, of the total number of houses in the village, total number of boys and girls of school-going age and illiterate adults. Marks will be allotted according to the following scheme.

(i) For good organisation and unity in the village. ... ..	25
(ii) For proper collection and account of Mushti Bhiksha. ... ..	25
(iii) For high percentage of boys and girls induced to attend schools. ... ..	25
(iv) For high percentage of adults induced to attend night schools. ... ..	25
(v) Improvement of sanitation—jungle-cutting, water-hyacinth clearance, filling up of dirty ditches and Dohas. ... ..	25
(vi) Improvement of communication—village paths, roads & khals. ... ..	25
(vii) Sports and amusements. ... ..	25
(viii) Any work of special merit — to be clearly described. ... ..	25
<b>Total.</b> ... ..	<b>200</b>

1. Badges—No decisions required.

2. The best village will be selected by a committee of five—consisting of the Vice-President and another member nominated by the Board for that purpose, the Union and the Asst. Union Secretary.

---

In case of complaint the Thana Secretary, the President and the Vice-president and the Joint Secretaries will visit and their decision in the matter will be final. In case of a tie the President or in his absence, the Vice-president will have a casting vote.

3. The best village in each P. S. will be selected out of the best villages in the various Unions by the last-mentioned body.

4. The best village in the Subdivision will be selected by a committee of five consisting of the President of the Council ( S. D. O. ) or if he cannot go, the Vice-president, the member-in-charge of organisation, the Subdivisional Police Officer if any, and two other members of the R. D. Council to be nominated by that body.

5. The best Union Secretary and the President will be selected by the Thana Association on the total of the works done in the various villages of the Union. Disputes will be decided by the body, mentioned above in 4, after enquiries.

6 & 7. The best three Thana or Joint Secretaries and Presidents will be selected by the body mentioned under head 4 above on the report of C. O.'s concerned and on the total of work done in the Thana.

8. By the President ( S. D. O. ) alone.

The Cups and Medals to the village Committees

---

will be distributed in a mass meeting held in the Union on R. D. days. The rest in the annual R. D. Conference held at head-quarters under the presidency of the District Magistrate, the Divisional Commissioner or, if possible, one of the Hon'ble Ministers.

I have nothing more to add except that the movement has great potentialities and will go a long way to remedy the ills of Bengal. I had great difficulties to start with. I had nothing before me to guide, but others will have a model, however defective, to help them. What little has been done at Sirajganj can be done elsewhere also with greater success and the results will be far-reaching if the work can be stabilised and continued. The future is hopeful and bright if only a will and a sufficiently powerful dynamo as a perennial source of succour and sustenance, is placed behind to work and keep it up.

---

## CHAPTER IX.

# Economy in public Services.

### SECTION I.

#### Pay of the Services."

A lot is being heard now-a-days about economy in public services and all criticism is focussed on the salaries of Government Officers. What do the officers get ? Let us see. The Deputies and Sub-Deputies start on Rs 125/- p. m. The Munsiffs on a little more, and with the exception of a few fortunate men who are promoted to the cadre of Collectors and District Judges, both the Deputies and Munsiffs retire on Rs 800/- or so at the fag-end of their lives. And who are the men who constitute these services ? The cream of provincial Universities go to the cadre of Deputies and Sub-Deputies and the brightest gems of the Bar to the Judiciary. Even if we ignore the fact that their duties involve great responsibility, discretion and honesty, the officers do a terrible amount of work, particularly the Deputies. And this is not one day's affair. They have to drudge all through their lives and return every day

---

at dusk from offices with swollen eyes. The work exhausts them completely and when they retire at the age of 55, no signs of life are left in them. This is the position. And yet irresponsible men would insist that the officers should get less than what they do now.

The civilians, of course, get a little more. But who are these men? The best product of British Universities and the cream of the Indian Continent—men who topped the list in their schools, in their colleges and Universities and the highest competitive examination of the country. They start with Rs 450/- p. m. and have to retire on Rs 2,200/-. Each of them is a gem, if not a genius, in some line and often in many. They would make an impression and prove their worth in any walk of life and would, most probably, earn more in any branch of business. Their record fully justifies this expectation. As members of the Civil Service also, they have created traditions of their own. They have built up a reputation which has gone beyond the shores of this country. Their honesty and integrity has never been questioned. They put duty before everything else and consider Government interest dearer than life itself and they continue to maintain their proud traditions. Their work involves tremendous responsibilities and many of them hold charge of tens of millions' worth of Government property. But they have never faltered and never failed. Is their pay too



---

high? The officers are an asset and should be looked upon from that angle of vision. They are pledged to render loyal service to the Government, be it responsible to the Crown, or the public. Their services will be available to any Government, be it of the right wing or of the left. They would make the best use of their talents and experience for the execution of any policy that is thought best. The critics should further remember that these public servants do not enjoy the freedom of speech and they cannot retort. The privileges of a public man and the charms of public life are denied to them for good, and unwarranted criticism will only make them dissatisfied & unhappy. They went in for the I. C. S. when the country could offer nothing better and nothing higher. Things have since changed and many of them think they are ill-placed. They have lost in start and have lost ground which they cannot easily recover though they were not the laggards behind but the heads of their times. This should be realised before anyone enters into wholesale criticism of their merits and worth.

The secret of economy in public administration does not lie in cutting down the pay of the officers. It lies in making the best use of their talents and services and here are a few suggestions, the results of careful thinking and deliberation. If these suggestions are followed, very soon the country will begin to feel proud of her services, and discover that they are not highly paid. They get only the reasonable minimum that it can afford.

## SECTION II.

### Possible lines of economy in administration.

Some three years ago I made a remark to Mr. Bottomley, Director of Public Instruction, Bengal, that the S. I.'s of schools are a waste. The matter was, however, dropped until it was revived last year. I was asked by the Department sometime ago to give my views in a concrete form and I submitted a note on the subject. In preparing this note I found that it was impossible not to cover a larger field than I had intended. I had even to make casual remarks about the general policy of administration. I have since added another topic, the P. W. D. The suggestions have an important bearing on the rural problems of the country. There are heaps and heaps of officers and yet the contact between the Government and the governed is not sufficiently close,—a matter of serious consideration if the problems of Rural Bengal are to be satisfactorily tackled. A **Charge** or **Unit Officer** for every block of 8 Unions seems to me indispensably necessary if any thing like an allround development and regeneration of the rural population is to be attempted. As explained in this chapter and mentioned elsewhere, each block of 8 unions should have a Thana, a Co-operative Bank, a Charge Officer and as at present, a Sanitary Inspector. There should be perfect harmony

---

and concord amongst them and they should be told clearly and emphatically that after due allowance for their specific and special functions has been made, they all exist for the one greater and larger interest, the amelioration of the condition of the rural masses by every means possible and practicable.

The general remarks made at the end of the note have been taken over to the next chapter as a summary of the various subjects discussed in earlier parts of the book. The statements attached to the note have been added as Appendix V after excluding such portions and arithmetical details, as are unlikely to be of much interest to the general public.

**The Proposal :** Proposed that the 4 services, namely, the S. I.'s of Schools, the S. R.'s, the Debt Settlement Officers, and the Circle Officers should be amalgamated into one service and that there should be only one officer to be designated as **Unit or Charge Officer** to act as S. R., Sub Inspector of Schools, Debt Settlement Officer and Circle Officer for a considerably curtailed and compact area.

**The genesis & a short history of the proposal.** In 1934 I had occasion to examine carefully the working of Primary Schools and Maktabas in the Patuakhali Subdivision. The results, were embodied in my memorandum entitled "A Survey of the Vital Problems of Patuakhali." Part of this memorandum dealing with education has appeared in print in the inspection note, dated 28th. to

---

31st. January, 1936, of J. M. Bottomley Esq., I. E. S., D. P. I. of Bengal and the rest in my address to the first Education Conference of Patuakhali held on the 2nd. March, 1936. My investigations had led me to the conclusion that the work of inspecting Primary Schools should profitably be entrusted to the C. O's. In support I give the following reasons :—

**S. I.'s. of School's.** (i) That the area under each S. I. of schools • is too large to be properly controlled.

(ii) That due to difficulties of touring, their inspections are not sufficiently frequent and regular.

(iii) That their opportunities of meeting the people are very limited and that they are seldom, if ever, heard and cared for by the public. Consequently, as a rule, their inspections go unheeded and wasted except in so far as petty irregularities of a technical nature are concerned.

.(iv) That due to these difficulties often schools and Maktabs continue to be borne on the list and obtain departmental grants without having any real or regular existence.

(v) That Union Boards, as a rule, do or should allot considerable amount of funds for Primary education. This expenditure in many places is controlled by the S. I.'s. of Schools from a distance. It is, therefore, often very much resented. The auditing officer is the C. O.'s

and it would lead to much better results if the C. O. also worked as Sub Inspector of Schools.' It is often "seen that Union Boards do not pay the sanctioned amounts to the teacher and the matter 'has ultimately to be referred to C. O. for redress."

(vi) That in all complicated and difficult matters concerning improvement of the schools, the help of the C. O. is indispensable and has invariably to be sought for.

I, therefore, ask,—why spend money on the S. I.'s? Why allow this terrible amount of wastage of nearly two-thirds of his time in covering long distances when another officer, i. e. the C. O. taking the same journey for Union Board inspection can easily and conveniently do both? Why not then train up the C. O.'s, generally men of superior mental equipment, in the art of school inspection and entrust them with this work? This would be free from the evils of unnecessary duplication of of journeys and consequent wastage of time. I further hold that the C. O.'s would be not only cheaper but what is far more important, would make really effective Inspectors. They hold enormous influence over the public and their position as guides of Union Boards only lends additional weight to this argument.

My suggestion, though only casually made in the memorandum, appealed to Mr. Bottomley and he said he would discuss the matter in a conference with the Divisional Commissioners. It is not known to me if he

---

did. As for myself I was too busy with other serious problems to be able to find time for pushing this matter any further. But I did not forget. Experience only confirmed my observations and as time passed my conviction grew stronger and stronger.

In the mean time experience had shown that there is another class of officers whose services for at least six months in the year are more or less completely wasted. The S. R.'s have precious little to do during the slack season even in the heaviest of the Sub-Registry offices. And in offices which are termed "light" it must really be a problem for them all through the year what to do with themselves.

These observations are not vague generalisations unsupported by statistics. Statement attached as Appendix will show that provincial average per office per year and daily average on the basis of 270 working days in the year have been calculated. It will further be seen that the average number of registration per office per day in the district of Pabna is a very close approximation to the corresponding provincial figures. For this district every kind of statistical information relevant to the issue has been obtained and compiled.

**Tentative proposal & Criticism.** In April, 1936, I was transferred to Sirajganj and soon after was asked to suggest subjects for discussion in the annual conference of Divisional Commissioners. I put in the following

---

as one,—“Decentralisation has proceeded too far in certain directions. S. I.’s of Schools are ineffective and should be dispensed with. C. O.’s should be trained up in the art of school inspection, their jurisdiction curtailed and number increased; S. R.’s for six months in the year have nothing to do. They might also do some inspection work. In any case some way for utilising their time should be found etc. etc.”

Copy of this extract was sent to the D. P. I. also for information. The D. P. I. referred the matter to the Divisional Inspector, Rajshahi, who examined the proposal and declared it as “not practical,” “absurd” “chimerical,” etc. etc.

In support he has said that the S. I.’s have not only to inspect but also to supply statistics, as if this cannot be done by other agencies. To be frank I can allow for a certain amount of natural resentment on the part of the Divisional Inspector, but more than that, his criticism does not unfortunately merit any serious consideration.

**D. S. O.’s** By the end of 1936, an entirely new factor had entered into calculation. Debt Settlement Boards were formed in a good part of the District and two Special Debt Settlement Officers were posted, one to each Subdivision to look after these new institutions. The Special Officers are supposed to afford some relief to the C. O.’s in debt settlement work, but in practice it is more

or less entirely their concern. Consequently they have jurisdiction concurrent with those of all the other C. O.'s. and have, therefore, to tour the length and breadth of the Subdivision. I do not deny that in theory, it is possible to make arrangements for avoiding a contingency of C. O. and Debt Settlement Officer having had to travel simultaneously to the same Union, but in practice it does happen and they do often travel and meet together in the mufasil, one to inspect his Union Board and the other to inspect his Debt Settlement work. The result is that neither the C. O.'s have obtained any tangible relief nor is the Special Officer able to manage effectively so many Boards spread over a large area.

**Waste of time by duplication of journeys.** Long journeys involve enormous wastage of time and the point that is often forgotten is that it is not only the T. A. that matters much, but the time, the working hours of the day for which officers are paid. An officer may have to travel 24 hours to make an inspection which may not occupy more than an hour or so. 5 hours of the working day have, therefore, been completely lost. Instruction can, of course, be issued to draw out programme from one Union to the next and so on. But in actual practice things run as I have stated. Besides, officers are human beings. They have their families and their houses to turn to. They cannot legitimately be expected to remain cut off from their headquarters for more than a few days at a stretch.



**Communities.** Another important point to consider is that communities and classes of people in rural areas are not so well-defined as in big towns. Whereas in a town like Calcutta we may have distinct groups with their own leaders and men to represent distinct interests; in a village, more often than not, there is only one set of people who represent all classes and interests. The choice of competent men in a village is extremely limited and the result is that, in nine cases out of ten, it is the same set who have to manage the school, if any, the same groups form the Union Board and a few of the same body form the Debt Settlement Board. Their character, their honesty and integrity are best known, if at all, to the Officer of the Circle and it is generally he who selects or influences the selection of the personnel of the various bodies. It is, therefore, very anomalous that one should form the Boards and the other should run them.

**Position** To illustrate the point further let us take the **illustrated** case of a Union privileged with a Union Board, a D. S. Board and one or two schools. Three officers start from headquarters to inspect the three different institutions. Let us also, suppose, as it very often happens, that the members of the three bodies are the same persons. If the C. O. wants the U. Bd. inspection to be made first, the other two officers must sit idle. Next comes the turn of the Special Officer. The S. I. has still another hour to wait to discuss

---

matters with the members.

Of course, I do not say that such a coincidence of inspection will happen very often, but the proposition does clearly show how absurd the present position has become.

**Position of proposal** Against that, let us train up competent officers in the arts of inspection of primary schools, of Unions and D. S. Boards and make them responsible for all these works. The first question is whether it would be possible for an officer to manage so many things: I say, "Yes". Let us curtail the area under his charge. Let us have blocks, say of 80—100 sq. miles area of 8—10 unions. Let the officer have his headquarters at or near about the centre, so that he may not find the farthest end of his jurisdiction more than 5—6 miles off. Let him work as S. R. for two days every week (a proposal that has been proved to be a convenient possibility, vide statement "A.") He will still have clear 16 days in the month to remain out on tour. Time occupied by the journeys will be reduced to an insignificant quantity and a young and honest officer will have no difficulty whatsoever in inspecting one U. Board, one D. S. Board, and one or two schools effectively every day.

Every part of his jurisdiction would be easily and speedily accessible to him and every one anxious to meet him would find him easily available and all through the

month. He will have no difficulty in collecting informations from any part and from the whole of his jurisdiction at 24 hours' notice nor will any important event pass unattended. This will then give us an ideal Unit Executive Officer in close and constant touch with the people and conversant with the whole field of public activity. The Unit officer will be in a position to play really and truly the role of a friend, philosopher and guide and I wonder if any one can dispute that this is what is urgently needed and will continue to be needed for a long time to come.

**Can the Unit Officer manage all the departments ?** It remains to examine if an average Unit Officer will be able to discharge the combined duties of an S. R., an S. I., a special D. S. Officer and a C. O. more effectively and still find some time and energy to spare for extra-departmental activities of nation-building.

It has not been possible for me to collect all Bengal statistics for all the departments mentioned. But it has been possible to calculate, from I. G. R's. report, the number of documents registered per office per day. I find that the provincial average is approximately the same as the daily average for the offices of the District of Pabna (statement A). With regard to the work done by the S. I.'s, D. S. Officer and the C. O., I can say from experience that the amount of work done by these officers in the district is approximately the same as that done by the same class of officers in other

districts. So in order to illustrate my proposition by way of example, I have prepared elaborate and detailed statements for this District which give all the relevant statistical informations and averages. These statements throw light on many side-issues and contain many important and valuable observations. I, therefore, strongly advise that no opinion should be formed until the statements have been studied carefully and thoroughly.

**The statements.** The 1st. statement (A) proves:—

(a) That the S. R.'s. have very little work to do for a good part of the year.

(b) That if the number is increased from 9 as at present (excluding District headquarters office) to 17 as proposed and the jurisdiction properly fixed, say, 9—10 unions covering approximately 80—100 sqr. miles (and there will be no difficulty in doing this) the work will be reduced to not half, but really to less than one-third.

(c) That it will be quite easy in spite of the expected increase due to registration of debt settlement awards to cut down the working days of a Sub-Registry office from 6 to 2. In other words it will occupy only  $\frac{1}{3}$ rd. of the Unit Officer's time.

The following 3 statements (B, C, D) will prove that due to curtailment of area, easy accessibility of the various institutions to be inspected in one trip and the great economy in time at present wasted on journeys, the work done by the S. I.'s of schools will not occupy

more than one-fourth of the Unit Officer's time. Similarly the work done by the Special Officer will occupy about one-ninth and that of the present C. O. will occupy about one-fourth. The Unit Officer will, therefore, still have a balance of  $1 - (\frac{1}{8} + \frac{1}{4} + \frac{1}{9} + \frac{1}{4})$  or one-eighteenth. This fraction of the time saved, howsoever small it may be, is a net gain and will be available for other development works.

**Efficiency.** As regards efficiency I need hardly repeat that it would rise very high indeed. The Unit Officer will be able to inspect every U. Bd. and every D. S. Bd. at least once in the month, if not twice. He would remain in constant and close touch and how it will effect efficiency need hardly be mentioned. With regard to schools there can be no earthly reason why he should not be able to inspect at least 30 schools in the month. This will give 360 for the year and would come to about 4 inspections annually i. e. about 3 to 4 times higher than is done at present.

With regard to the possible objection that S. I.'s are B. T.'s, I suggest that Unit Officers be trained for 3 months in the essentials of school inspection. They will have to deal with primary schools and these institutions really need more common sense to deal with than a detailed knowledge of the theory of education.

**Finance.** The next point to be examined is finance. Statement E, F, and G will show that even though the

number of Sub-Registry Offices is proposed to be almost doubled, a proposal which would be highly appreciated by all sections of the public, many of whom have to travel miles and miles for getting their documents registered, the combined cost of 17 Sub-registry offices, the pay and T. A. of U. O's, the pay and T. A. of their peons etc., will be much less than what Government spend now. The statements are open to examination. The proposal can effect a saving of about Rs. 3,50,000/- for the province.

**Disposal of surplus officers.** A question may arise that the total number of officers under the four groups,—S. R's, S. P's, D. S. O's. and C. O's. would be larger than the new service will absorb, say 24 against 17 in Pabna and if so, what will happen to the rest and what will the Government do with the surplus officers? It is clear that service being a contract Government cannot discharge them outright. In that case Government cannot possibly make a saving either for some time. But they can be better used. In my statements I have advanced concrete suggestions how best they can be utilised to the great advantage of the department of education and general administration. If my suggestions are accepted many a knotty problem which seem to defy all solutions will be solved. Statement "H" will throw further light on this subject.

**Control.** I may also discuss the question of control.

---

It is obvious that the District Magistrate and under him the S. D. O. will exercise the general supervision on the whole field of U. O.'s work. Even at present the District Magistrate is the District Registrar and in many places President of District School Board too. But to safeguard that no branch of the Unit Officer's duty is neglected, the U. O.'s can be instructed to send carbon copies of the extracts of their tour diaries regarding schools, direct to the District Inspector of Schools who will draw the attention of the District Magistrate or the S. D. O., where and whenever necessary. District Sub-Registrars will continue for regular inspection of the Sub-Registry Offices as at present.

Of course, some departments may feel that they would be deprived of the direct control that they are used to exercise on their special departmental men. But this is unimportant. So far as registration is concerned the District Magistrate even now is the District Registrar and in the same way he can be made subordinate to the D. P. I. As such there should be no difficulty for the heads of these departments to exercise full control over the U. O.'s through the District Magistrate.

As for the purely sentimental side of the question, it can confidently be ignored. It will not be fair to apprehend that the head of any department will mind relinquishing direct control over a few officers in the

face of such far-reaching consequences to the Government and the country as the proposal contemplates.

I have now only to make a few general remarks more. My proposition is based on facts verified by personal experience and substantiated by statistical data such as I could obtain. I have confined myself to the practical side of problems and have avoided entering into theoretical arguments on the theory of centralisation or decentralisation of control. I have also avoided discussing such possible objections as did not appear to me material. So none need think that I am not prepared to go still farther to defend this proposal than I have within these pages. There is no doubt that the proposal contemplates a radical change in the administrative machinery and I admit this charge if it is one, but I am not afraid of it. It is time we developed a little self-confidence, and thought that what exists is not necessarily unalterable and that our great predecessors did not necessarily speak the last word on any subject. Not a few of us suffer from this complex and it has made us lifeless, stereotyped and stagnant. I close the discussion with the remark that unless this proposal is adopted "Rural Development" will remain more or less a farce.

### SECTION III.

So much about the S. I's. of Schools, the S. R's., the Special Officers and the C. O's. But this does not by



---

any means exhaust the list of departments where economy can be effected. I will mention only one case more. Take the P. W. D., one of the cheap jokes of the table-talker and the humourist. "Public Waste Department" is rather an old name and is giving place to more mischievous interpretations. Even we officers have to hear this common gibe quite frequently in light conversation and let it pass off without protest.

But the fact is that many of the serious-minded people also fail to appreciate the necessity of this department. It is said that Government must have its own staff to look after its huge buildings and constructions. But is Government property essentially different from that of the public? I doubt and if it is not, why cannot the Government entrust that same agency with the charge of looking after its buildings and constructions which deals with enormous amount of public funds and properties under the other public bodies? Why cannot the services of the Dist. Engineers and D. B. Overseers who are equally qualified experts be utilised for looking after buildings and constructions of the Government also? There is the Collector who is entrusted with tens of millions worth of Government property in every District. Why cannot he be trusted to look after a few offices and buildings more with the help of the District Engineering staff? Let them get a small commission and work under the direction of the Collector. They will do it with pleasure and do it better and cheap.

A few senior men may, of course, be kept at the headquarters of the Government to examine every proposal involving expenditure above a certain limit, and to superintend the work of the Dist. Engineers. More than that does not seem to be necessary at all. To give a concrete instance of this waste I quote the position at Sirajganj. There is one P. W. D. Overseer at Sirajganj and a huge staff at Pabna, probably costing about a thousand rupees per month. I can say this with certainty that at least the man at Sirajganj has not got enough work to occupy him for more than half an hour a day and yet he is there.

And with all this I am often told that the P. W. D. are an awfully busy department. So much so that even if the Collector himself wants some urgent piece of work to be done, however small and petty, it will keep his office busy writing letters for six months. And this would really be rather quick work.

Let the Collector have an additional clerk with the qualification of an Overseer and let all the P. W. D. buildings and lands be transferred to the Collectorate. Let the District Engineer and his staff take charge of the repairs and supervision. It will save a lot of money with which very many urgently needed offices and buildings can be constructed.

---

## CHAPTER X.

### Recapitulation and the Future.

In the chapters that have preceded I have discussed almost all that appeared to me vital to the interest of larger Bengal. I have been frank, though not as much as I could be. Still I have not concealed my pronounced sympathy with the poor and the helpless. I cannot really help it. It has been the strongest passion of my life right from child-hood to the present age and will perhaps never leave. But I am neither a crazy socialist nor a utopian dreamer. I face realities and try to be a practical man. How far I have succeeded in my attempt, I leave the readers to judge.

In places I may have betrayed a sense of distrust and dislike of the moneyed and the vested interests. But in reality I am neither an enemy of the money-lender nor that of the capitalist. They are indispensable pillars of society and have to play an important role in the body politic. Every individual wants to have complete freedom to develop his talents to the best and rise as high as he can. Society would become lifeless but for this powerful and legitimate instinct of animal man. Life must grow physically, mentally

and intellectually. This is the supreme lesson that nature itself wants man to learn. But does man admit it? He does not. He proclaims to be human and says he has built something of his own. He has evolved something he calls civilization. He considers himself the sole custodian and the torch-bearer of this new art. He differentiates himself from the beast and insists on being called a human being. He has made laws, he has framed rules for the society to follow. He has prepared codes of human conduct. He calls them the great laws of truth, the fundamental principles of ethics. But does he realise that all his little toys are nothing but a different expression of the beast in him, a different name of the same eternal truth, "the survival of the fittest?" Does he realise that all this jugglery of codes and laws merely enforces the will of the stronger on the weaker? Can he deny that the entire structure of society is based on the same primary instinct of exploiting the inferior by the superior?

Yet he insists that he is different from the beast. He is a human being, an intellectual being. He is the proud possessor of a civilization. He has developed culture. He has shaken off the beast in him. He breathes in the new and sublime atmosphere of an intellectual world. Is it radically different from the old? Is it really new, I ask? Is the mental agony of helpless poverty and starvation less painful than the agony

of physical pain ? Is the inheritance of life-long bondage to the wealthy and the mentally superior radically different from being born a slave ? Yes, he says, because it is not sudden, it is prolonged, it is not felt. But what about man's ethics and his morality ? What about the difference between the beast and the human being that man poses to be. Let him search his heart. Let him try to practise at least a little of what he is so anxious to profess and teach. Let there be capitalists, let there be money-lenders, let there be other vested interests. No one will grudge. They are all necessary, useful and perhaps indispensable. But let them become a little more human, a little more reasonable, a little more merciful, a little more mindful that the intellectually inferior, the mentally less developed man is at least one of their own kind. However stupid he may be, he is one of that same herd, one of that same species that they are so proud to belong to. Treat him well, treat him kindly, treat him as a human being.

This is my appeal to those whose interest will clash with that of the masses. Do have your interest, do have your profit ; you are entitled to it. You have collected money by the sweat of your brow. You have organised capital by hard work. You had had your education, a favourable start, and perhaps inherent superiority of intellect. But do not let cupidity get the better of the human in you if there be any. Leave

---

something for the debtor to enable him to become solvent. Leave something for the worker to enable him to live. Remember that in the scheme of nature life and labour have more value than capital.

But will all these have any effect? I do not know. I should not expect. But there are remedies. Let the same machinery that has for centuries protected the vested interest protect the poor. Let the State intervene. Let the crushing burden of inherited debt be written off. Let the rates of interest be scaled down and definitely fixed. Let the capitalist and the middle men pay more to the State to enable it to help and uplift those who never had a chance before. Let the new State take up the cause which could not be taken up before. Let a searching account be taken of what has been done and what is to be done.

What have we done with co-operation, I ask. Undoubtedly the movement was started with the best of intentions, but can it be challenged that it was ill-planned and ill-executed from the start? The theory of a high rate of interest from the members and the conception of creating independent credit societies was fundamentally defective. It has become definitely sour now to all co-operative debtors. The country got an opportunity, the time when trade and business had reached its lowest water-mark to put matters right, but it was not availed of. With one bold stroke a good deal

---

could have been done. But none stirred and to-day the country has to see, at any rate that is what I think, the coffin of the movement being prepared with increasingly greater pomp and glory.

It beats my imagination to know why the co-operative staff could not help agriculture and cottage industries and why they cannot or do not teach the cultivator to increase his earning capacity. Are they over-worked? I am definitely certain they are not. Perhaps there is still time. The arrear interest can be written off. The true type of co-operative "banks" can be opened, say one at each thana headquarters and the co-operative staff trained to open agricultural farm, improve cattle-breed and develop cottage industries. The Agricultural Debtors Act would have done better by fixing a more economic minimum holding. In any case it needs a satisfactory credit and banking machinery to supplement. This will re-establish credit, bring money into circulation and improve the condition of the country all round.

What have we done in the field of education? Have we seriously thought over the appalling illiteracy of the Indian masses? Have we seriously considered the continuous and rapid increase of our population and taken steps to meet the increasing demand? Has any of our great thinkers and proved philosophers made any serious effort to evolve practical means for imparting

---

rudimentary education to the 95% illiterates and have they ever thought that it is a possibility to do so in the course of 10 years if we tackle the problem boldly and with confidence ? Paucity of funds, imperialistic domination and all the rest of it make only a poor excuse. Where is the desire and where is the will ? Have not the backward nations elsewhere demonstrated the possibilities ? Did funds rain through the sky over these countries ? They did not. They came out of the same half-clad and half-starved illiterate masses on whom they were spent. The circulation has borne interest and has left the nation richer and wealthier not in terms of money only, but in terms of the true wealth, the improved individual and the higher type of nationals and citizens.

A lot can be done by organisation and voluntary effort. The Rural Development movement can really go a long way towards the solution of many problems such as Sanitation, Communication and Mass Education. It seems impertinent on my part to make bold statements. But I feel I have thought enough and worked enough to entitle me to do so. Let us have the requisite number of the C. O's, as proposed. Let us develop and make real use of the most potent instruments of nation-building that we possess—the Union Boards. Let the C. O's, or Unit Officers have a little more statutory control over Union Boards budgets and assessments.



---

Let them also have summary powers to impose a symbolical fine up to Re 1/- only per month on those who would not become literate inspite of convenient arrangements having been made. Let these officers go ahead with a well-chalked-out programme of rural development and account for results. 'Ten years,' seems to me really a long time to turn out over 50% literates in the rural areas even under the existing conditions.

That these proposed powers will cut at the roots of democracy I am not prepared to admit. I do not dispute that democracy has a greater appeal to the average individual than any other form of Government. But in its present form it is not the last word and world events have definitely challenged this conception. In any case when the centre and controlling authority is national and democratic, there can be no reasonable objection and no real harm if the executive of a democratic Government are equipped with such petty powers as I have suggested for the development of a nation which, barring a few platform nationalists, is still in its infancy and needs a good deal of driving and pushing.

At the same time the out-look of the Executive also who so long concerned themselves primarily with the maintenance of law and order and the administration of justice must be given a new orientation. As the only machinery available to a national Government, too poor to afford another, the Executive cannot, in my opi-

---

nion, any longer confine themselves merely to the discharge of their imperative duties of maintaining peace. They must shoulder a wider sphere of responsibilities, the amelioration of the rural masses who form the back-bone of the country. This has to be brought home to them more specifically than has been done so far. But it should not be forgotten that they also have their difficulties and disabilities. These have to be reckoned with and remedied and their work in the sphere of nation-building systematically gauged and appreciated.

Only a word more about the future. Where there is a will there is a way. Have the necessary will and everything else will follow. The condition of the masses of Bengal is appalling indeed, but it admits and responds to treatment. A few years is too short an interval in the life-history of a nation but it counts and it will be criminal to lose a single moment more. The country cannot wait any longer. A new spirit of real service and patriotism must come into existence and that immediately. To attempt to make every one a pauper will not do. It does not appeal to practical minds and will never work. What is needed is a thoughtful co-ordination of the resources and energies of the various component parts in a spirit of reasonable sacrifice and give-and-take. Those who are ahead must stop to look back and pull up the the rest. It is only fair to expect them to do so unless they want to build a nation of their own.

---

Those who have enjoyed and owned much and for so long must part with a little to enable their common State to do something for those who never had.

The different castes and communities also have to be accommodated in the same way. There are the Mussalmans, the Christians, the Hindus and the depressed classes. Their special interests must be safeguarded. It will be idiotic to believe that the Mussalmans, for instance, will ever give up their strong religious affinities and all their national culture to merge into others. It is against their grain, against the basic principles of their faith, and against the lessons of history and they will never do it. The great Ataturk might have succeeded in carrying things a little too far ; but it should be remembered that the Turks never in their whole history imbibed the true spirit and the basic principles of Islam. And I do not know if Ataturk knew well what he did nor am I sure if he is not already repenting for some of the extreme steps taken by him. He may come round. The Mussalmans can combine with any other body and community with perfect sincerity ; but they will never willingly allow their religious susceptibilities to be hurt. It won't do to try it.

The obvious need of the time, therefore, is to accommodate generously the special and particular interest of all these heterogeneous elements in the country, secure their confidence, make them feel happy and contented

and thus develop a genuinely solid nation in the country. The Namaşudras also whose condition is usually the worst everywhere will deserve special treatment and push. It won't do to ignore these facts. They will never come up to the mark without special treatment. Let them have what has always been denied to them.

But I am confident the time will come and very soon when this new phase will begin. There are sincere men everywhere and in every community. Bengal's past record, however tardy! it might have been in some ways, is certainly very bright in many others. Let the bright become brighter, more realistic, more accommodating and more truly patriotic. The miseries will soon end and Bengal will emerge proud of its great achievement. LET THAT GLORIOUS ERA BEGIN EARLY. LET THAT GLORIOUS MORN BREAK SOON.





# Appendix IV.

## Classification of Union Boards.

(i) The Union Boards of Sirajganj Subdivision have reached a certain stage of development and it seems highly desirable that the comparative efficiency and worth of each Union Board be systematically examined on the basis of certain definite standards and the results made known to the public in general and to their constituents in particular. So far, there has been no criterion and definite standard by which to test and classify the Boards. In future and until revised, Union Boards will be classified according to the following scheme. The usefulness of Union Boards depends a great deal on their expenditure on works of public utility. This points out the need of a high percentage of assessment under 37 (b) and good collection of taxes.  $\frac{2}{3}$  of the marks have, therefore, been allotted to these two items. The scheme is sufficiently definite so as not to allow personal likings to interfere with it. It is as follows :—

A. Assessment U. S. 37 (b)	Maximum marks	...	100
(i) If belows 25% of that		Remarks.	
under 37 (a) .....	0		
(ii) 25%—30%	25—1—30		
(iii) 31%—50%	32—2—70		
(iv) 51%—60%	73—3—100		
B. Collection.	Maximum marks	...	100
(i) Below 80%	0		
(ii) 80%—85%	25—1—30		
(iii) 86%—90%	32—2—40		
(iv) 91%—95%	44—4—60		
(v) 96%—100%	68—8—100		

C. Regular payment of Chaukidars and payment of equipment charges.

Maximum marks ... .. 40

3 marks for each regular and punctual payment of Chaukidars. 4 for punctual payment of costs of Chaukideri uniforms, making the total 40.

D. Compliance with instructions for preparation of assessment and budget allotment,

Maximum marks ... .. 30

( For every deviation proportionate marks will be deducted unless such deviation is covered by specific order. )

(i)  $\frac{1}{3}$  of assessment, under sec. 37 (b) for education,  $\frac{1}{3}$  for communication, and  $\frac{1}{3}$  for water supply ; expenditure to be incurred within the year. 15

(ii) Neat Sherista work, punctual submission of budget and assessment list, regular check of vouchers by P. U. B. and members, good process service—careful & faithful. 15

E. Punctual submission of reports in criminal enquiry and for high percentage of amicable settlement effect (5 marks for each kind of efficiency).

Maximum marks ... .. 10

Ordinarily not more than 10 cases are referred to P. U. B.'s for such enquiries annually. A register of enquiry is being supplied to each P. U. B.

Where Bench and Court powers have been given these will apply to quick disposal of cases and general efficiency of Bench and Court.

**General efficiency and any special work.**

F. <i>e. g.</i> Execution of any special work of development, assessment under Sec. 37 (b) exceeding 50% etc.	...	...	20
G. Rural Development, keen interest in education, agriculture, industries and other rural development works.	...	...	50
			<hr/> 350

1. The total of maximum marks is 350. All Boards securing 65% and above will be classed A, 50% and above, below 65% classed B and the rest classed C.

2. Attempts will be made to invest each and every A class Board with Bench and Court powers unless there are special reasons. In the same way Bench and Court powers will be liable to be withdrawn from all B and C class Boards enjoying these powers at present.

3. Members and Presidents of all A class Boards will be given precedence and preferential treatment in all Government and public functions.

(ii) Matters regarding election of member to Union Boards, Local Boards and District Boards have been taken out of the jurisdiction of the Civil Courts. But matters regarding the assessment of Union rates continue to remain within the scope of the Civil Courts. On the other hand sec. 40 of the V. S. G. Act empowers the District Magistrate to revise on his own initiative or at the motion of the person concerned, the assessment of any assessee after making such enquiries as he may deem fit to make. This position is anomalous and it is extremely urgent and important that the matter be examined and Union Board assessment taken out of the jurisdiction of the Civil Courts. Otherwise there is no end of the harassment the Union Boards are liable to be put to most easily. Whether the case is decreed in favour of or against the Board, the



long-drawn and troublesome litigation has a great demoralising effect and very nearly brings the Board's work to a stand-still. And I fear that that people who do not like that the masses be developed will resort to this litigation at the slightest increase in their taxation. Such cases have actually occurred and in one the assessee has spent about Rs 300/- for a just enhancement of Rs 5/- only. He does not mind spending another sum of Rs 300/- as long as there is a chance to ruin the Board. The Board concerned had to spend more than hundred rupees for the case and got a decree in their favour, but it is not a gain nor can it be; yet the Board had to challenge boldly to maintain its prestige and authority. The proper court for such cases to refer to should be the District Magistrate and after him the Hon'ble Minister in charge. I repeat that my suggestion is an important one, deserving careful attention. The Boards must be protected if they are to carry out the will of the nation.

---

## Appendix IV (A)

### Additional sources of funds for Rural Development

(i) Recently I had the privilege of meeting a group of M. L. A.'s. together in Calcutta. Mr. Abdul Hamid of Pabna was one of them. He asked me to prepare a note on the possibilities of imposing a small tax of, say, one or two pice per maund of jute, fish and other commodities exported to Calcutta from the various centres in Bengal. He promised to supply me with the necessary data. Unfortunately I have not had the opportunity to obtain the necessary statistics either from him or from any other source. I cannot, therefore, risk any opinion. But I fear there will be complications. If the Steamer and Railway Companies only are asked to work as collection agencies, problems like the rail road and steamer boat competition will present difficulties and to counteract it paid collecting staff may have to be provided. Besides, other issues, whether this burden will ultimately fall on the producer, or the middle man or the consumer will have to be carefully examined. This would need detailed study for which I have not enough leisure.

The hint was, however, not lost altogether and led me to think of an easier and more practical solution.

The merchant community have a system of collecting a kind of subscription called *Britti* from cultivators and petty sellers of raw articles such as jute, paddy etc. The rates vary, but usually it is one pice per rupee of articles purchased. The fund also called *Ishwar Britti* comes to thousands of rupees and is supposed to be earmarked for charities to be decided upon by the merchant community or the individual merchant concerned. The purposes for which these sums are, as a rule, spent are *Kalibaris*, *Akhras*, *Jatras* and in some places, grants to educational institutions.

But unfortunately it is not often that proper accounts are kept and I know instances where it is treated as the personal property of the individual merchant and disbursed entirely according to his own sweet will. More often it is converted to his private use and no body seems to take any notice of it.

But this *Britti* is raised from the tillers of the soil and in all fairness belongs to them more than to any body else. Its proper use, therefore, would be the provision of such common needs of the localities as would benefit both the donors as well as the collectors or in the alternative in the ratio of 9 to 1.

At a rough calculation, the average value of jute purchased by merchants of Sirajganj would be about Rs 15,00,000/- If *Britti* is collected @ one pice per rupee the total amount would come annually to about Rs 24,000/- This is a little more than the Govt. of India's R. D. grant for 1937-40.

The collection of this fund does not seem to present any insurmountable difficulty. The number of merchants who stock jute is not large and I do not think it would be difficult for one or two special officers in each district to collect this fund.

10% of this should be left in the hands of the merchants to be spent on such subjects, religious or charitable, as they may think best, subject to the condition that it is properly accounted for. The rest, after meeting the cost of collection, should be earmarked, say for the following purposes:—

(i)  $\frac{1}{3}$  for improvement of agriculture, specially of the staple commodity found in the Subdivision or District.

(ii)  $\frac{1}{3}$  on improvement of industries specially on cotton and jute-weaving.

(iii)  $\frac{1}{3}$  for providing facilities for sports.

I think these suggestions are thoroughly practicable and no question of infringement of civil liberties will be involved. The State has an inherent right to impose certain obligations on its subjects and this is hardly more than such simple obligation. If the State can impose tax on incomes, it can also direct that certain compulsory subscription on the line of the road cess be collected by certain individuals.

A simple act "To regulate the collection of *Britti*" is all that is needed.

The collection should be made obligatory and the R. D. Commissioner through the Collector should operate on the fund within the purpose specified.

---

## INSPECTIONS.

(ii) Though the task of supervision and Inspection of R. D. worker of village committees has been entrusted to the Presidents and Secretaries of the Union R. D. Societies, it has been found in practice that this machinery is not always sufficient for keeping up the workers at the requisite pitch of enthusiasm. To meet this difficulty, the services of all the touring officers, namely the Sanitary Inspectors, the Sub-Inspectors of Schools, the Co-operative Bank staff, the Marriage Registrars, the Circle Officers and even the Police Officers have been enrolled and I am quite confident that the position will be improved very considerably. But this co-operation will, after all, have to be of a casual nature and though extremely desirable and necessary cannot be depended upon for such items as the night schools.

I am, therefore, developing a new Agency of inspections through the staff of H. E., Minor English and Junior Madrasas. There are 70 such institutions in this subdivision. The total strength is about 350 teachers. Most of these teachers live in villages spread all over the subdivision. If each individual is definitely given charge of half a dozen schools situated in a small block of villages adjoining to his own, about 2000 night schools can be inspected monthly and kept up regularly. The headmasters can collect fortnightly reports from their teachers and after consolidation forward them, through the Mohalla Choukidars to the Head master of the centrally situated High English School. Then the report can be consolidated for the whole Thana and submitted to the R. D. Council.

**R. D. DIARY.**

(iii) It has been found necessary to introduce an **R. D. Diary Book** for the village committees as well as for the Union Secretary and other inspecting staff.

The following form is being followed.—

**Form of Diary for the Union Secretary, Joint Secretary and other Inspecting Officers.** Captain Secretaries are also requested to keep record of their activities in the above form.

1. Serial No.
2. Date of Inspection,
3. Name of village inspected and by whom.
4. Date of last inspection.
5. Is the Union Secy. inspecting the society sufficiently frequently ?
6. Adult population of the village ( Male ),
7. Population of girls of school-going age.
8. Population of boys of school going age.
9. No. of students on the roll :—(1) Adults, (2) Girls, (3) Boys.
10. „ „ actually attending and average for the month.
11. Any school house, its condition.
12. Financial condition of the schools :—
  - (a) Amounts collected by Musti-bhiksha ; are the accounts properly kept ? Monthly average income.
  - (b) Grant from Union Boards or District Board if any or from village subscription.
13. Sanitary work :— Brief description ; filling up of ditches and dobas, jungle and waterhyacinth clearance, tanks and khals, if any.
14. Communication :— Length of roads repaired or newly made.
15. Value of work done under 13 and 14.
16. Sports :— arrangements for playground, clubs etc.
17. Whether Captain Secretary enjoys confidence of his colleagues and keeps discipline, causes of party faction if any and steps taken by inspecting officers to remove the same.
18. Quality of organisation and class of society in A, B and C as per instruction on the opening page.

## PROPAGANDA.

(iv) It seems desirable that each Subdivision should have a Propaganda Officer primarily for R. D. These officers should be appointed by the Government and should work under their administrative control. Their service should, however, be lent to the D. Boards to be maintained as a permanent feature of D. B. establishment. The cost should be borne by the D. B.s' by payment of a fixed annual contribution. The officers should be supplied with magic lanterns, cinema outfit, gramophones and later on wireless sets.

But even this will not do. Each village night school should be supplied with a weekly newspaper containing useful articles, a summary of week's important news and simple comments. Every village without exception must get this paper and each Union Board should contribute Rs 40/- to Rs 50/- annually for 20 to 25 copies for the villages within its jurisdiction. Subscriptions may be credited to the Treasury and the circle officer should see that this is done. I see no objection to this. If the union can be compelled to maintain rural police for the protection of life and property of its constituents, it can also be compelled to see that the mental outlook of the people is not allowed to deteriorate. Acts and laws are made to lay down the rules of human conduct, and if and when they stand in the path of progress, they must either be changed or shattered.

Realising this great need of propaganda through a newspaper the R. D. Council of Sirajganj started its "*Palli Pradip*" of which about 7 to 8 hundred copies are distributed in rural areas. A "*Palli Pradip*" for the whole province is needed and it should be printed in Calcutta under the supervision of a Board of Directors. The paper should be despatched to each Union direct in packets of 20 or 25 each. The Choukidars must deliver them within 24 hours to the respective villages. This will develop on one side close contact between the government and the governed and together with R. D. movement already discussed at length, will raise in the course of a few years a

nation which would be substantially literate and considerably free from malaria and other epidemic diseases. More than that, the new nation that will rise out of the existing logs of wood, though it will continue to remain a nation of paupers for some time more, will no more be a nation of slaves and beggars. It will be a nation of well-disciplined self-conscious and self-confident men vibrating with new life, new energy and new vitality. What Mussolini and Stalin can do in Europe can also be done by a band of workers in India.

---

## Appendix V.

### Summray of Statements.

**Statement "A"** shows that S. R.'s have not got enough work to do and are more or less completely wasted for six months in the year. i. e. during the slack season.

That the S. R.'s register only 10·3 (provincial average is 10·5) documents per working day of a year of 270 days and issue 2·2 letters which is not more than one hour's work.

That Thana jurisdictions and consequently S. R. office jurisdictions are very defective and need revision. That if this is done and number of S. R. Offices increased, say to 17 against 9 as at present in Pabna District, i. e. one per thana, the work in the S. R. Offices will be reduced not to  $\frac{1}{2}$  but to  $\frac{1}{4}$ th, and that it will be enough if the S. R. Office works only 2 days in heavy season and 1 day in the light season per week.

**Statement "B"** shows the work done by S. I.'s of Schools. They have about 206 schools each spread in about 300 sqr. miles to inspect. They cannot exercise effective control.

If the number of inspecting officers is increased to 17 they will have 85 schools each in about 100 sqr. miles area. Average number of letters per office would come to  $\frac{1}{2}$  letter a day.

**Statement "C"** shows charges of C. O.'s and they have 25—30 Unions spread over 300 sqr. miles. Major portion of their time is wasted in covering long distances and they can not effectively supervise the work.



**Statement "D"** shows charge of Special Officers ; they have a whole Sub-division each i. e, about 80 D. S. Bds. in about 900 sqr. miles too big to be controlled effectively.

**Statement "E"** (a), (b), (c) and (d) shows cost of the four services separately. Under (a) the cost of proposed 17 S. R. Offices including cost of establishment, rent, contingencies, pay and T. A. of peons has also been shown.

**Statement "F"** shows cost of the proposed 17 Charge or Unit Officers with cost of 17 S. R. Offices under them, the pay, T. A. and house allowance of the officers have also been shown. The quality of the officers has also been discussed.

**Statement "G"** shows consolidated cost of the existing four services and the cost of the proposed 17 S. R. Offices and Charge offices. It is found that the proposal will effect a saving of about Rs. 3,50,000/- for the whole province.

**Statement "H"** shows the services should be constituted. How surplus officers can be with advantage utilised for training Gurus and the rest used to give the much-needed relief to Executive officers in the Districts and subdivisions to enable the executive officers to take greater interest in rural problems.

**Note :—** Suggested that at least statements A, F, G and H should carefully be read.

---

**Statement "A"**—A Statement showing the amount of work done in the Sub Registry offices in the District of Patna with a few other important details. The statement has been compiled from I. G. R.'s Annual Report and from replies received from the various S. R. Offices in response to my questionnaire issued on the subject.

**Note :—** The District Registry office at Pabna has not been included in the statement. There are 9 mofassil Sub-Registry offices in the District.

---

The average annual total number of documents registered in these offices in 1933, 1934 and 1935 was 21,525. The average total no. of letters issued was about 5,000.

If the number of working days in the year is taken to be 270(365—52 Sundays and 43 other holidays) the average number of documents and letters issued per office per day would be 10·3 and 2·2 respectively. The provincial figure for 1935 gives an average of 10·5 documents per office per working day.

It is, however, seen that the number of documents is subject to seasonal variations. Broadly speaking, the period from November to April is considered the busy season and May to October the slack season. It appears from the replies received from Sub-Registrars that the average per day during the busy and the slack season is as follows :—

**Busy season 13·5, slack season 5.**

Supposing the number of S. R. Offices is increased to 17 (there are 17 Thanas in the District, one office per Thana) the average figure of documents registered during the busy and slack seasons and the average number of letters per office per day would work out at 7·1, 2·6, & 1·2 respectively.

It will appear from the figures showing distribution of works at the various offices that some offices are heavy while others are light. Why? Because the jurisdiction of the various S. R. offices is based on the jurisdiction of the Police Thanas. The jurisdiction of the Police Thanas seems to me very unsatisfactory and haphazard. A glance at the map of not only Pabna but of other districts will show that Thana boundaries have been marked with little care and thought, or in the alternative, have been allowed

to grow up according to natural process of expansion or reduction and no attempt to systematise them has been made. Neither facilities of communication and police control nor any unavoidable combination of revenue Mouza or density of population have played any part in these arrangements. The thana jurisdictions require drastic change and I do not think there is any insurmountable difficulty in doing so. All that is needed is a Conference between the District officers, his S. D. O.'s and C. O.'s, the D. I. G. of Police, S. P. and Subordinate Police staff. The only difficulty that may arise in some cases would be about a few P. W. D. or Police Dept. buildings constructed for accommodating more Police Officers in one Thana and less in the other. I do not think this is really a serious problem. If the jurisdiction of the 17 thanas of Pabna are revised and redistributed into blocks of very nearly equal sizes (slight variations will only prove the rule) the question of heavy and light offices will more or less cease to exist. There may be one or two Thanas where the question of density of population may have to be considered, but this will not arise in more than one tenth of the area. Of course these remarks apply to Subdivisions and Districts also, but that may safely be left to be taken up later on.

Let us now examine how much time of the Sub-Registrars is occupied when a document is presented for registration. Not more than a few minutes. An S. R. in the heavy season can manage as many as 24 documents per day. This is roughly 4 times the number of documents that each officer will be required to register during the heavy season if the number of offices is increased to 17 and their jurisdiction made more proportionate. In other words the number of working days can be reduced in the ratio 4 to 1, i. e., from 6 days of the week to  $1\frac{1}{2}$  day or very safely and without any unnecessary strain, to 2. The officers will then be free 4 days every week.

It may be said that documents presented in the office must be returned as early as possible after registration preferably within 3 or 4 days of presentation and this system may be interfered with. In my opinion there should not be any great

difficulty about this either. But even if there is any, departmental instructions can be modified without any loss of efficiency to suit new conditions.

During the slack season one day in the week ought to be quite enough. In other words I propose that (a) there should be a revision of thana and Sub-Registry Office jurisdiction, (b) there should be 17 Sub-Registry Offices in the District of Pabna, (c) The S. R. offices should work on Fridays and Saturdays during the busy season (November to April) and only on Saturday during the slack season (May to October).

Statement "B" showing work done by S. I.'s of Schools with observations :—

No. of officers	...	...	7
Average No. of Schools per officer.	...	...	206
If the number be increased to 17 the average would come to 8½ schools and ½ a letter a day.			

I want to make two observations :—

(1) The area under each officer (about 250 sqr. miles) is too big to permit the officers to inspect the schools spread therein. ¼th. of the working time is wasted in covering the distances.

(2) The S. I.'s of Schools have no connection with and no influence on the public and, therefore, greater part of their inspections is not given effect to.

**Statement C and D showing charges of Circle Officers and D. S. Officers :—**

This statement shows the number of Circle Officers of the District and other particulars.

No. of C. O.'s	...	...	6
No. of Unions under them	...	...	25-30
Area under each	...	...	300 sqr. miles.
(1) No. of D. S. O.'s	...	...	2
(2) No. of D. S. Boards under each	...	...	70-80

**Remarks :—** (1) C. O.'s and D. S. Officers have too big an area to be effectively controlled. Half of their time is wasted in touring. This can be avoided.

(2) Duplication of tours by C. O.'s. and D. S. Officers for the same purpose has no sense.

If increased to 17. they will have about 8 to 10 Unions each in about 100 sqr. miles roughly and D. S. work will also be distributed.

### Statement "E" showing cost of each service in details.

This statement shows the cost of the existing services namely:—

(a) 9 S. R. Offices (b) 7 S. I.'s. of Schools, (c) 2 Special Officers and (d) 6 Circle Officers.

#### (a) S. R. Offices.

The cost of the 9 S. R. Offices is as follows :—

(1) The average annual total cost of these 9 S. R. Offices in 1933. 1934 and 1935 was Rs. 34,459/5/3 or say Rs. 35,000/- at the most.

(2) Pay of the S. R.'s is Rs.  $1800 \times 12 = 21,600/-$  approx.

(3) Difference between (1) and (2)  $35000/- - 21600/- = 13,400/-$

(4) Average per office :—  $\frac{13,400/-}{9} = 1488/10/0.$

(5) If there are 17 offices the total cost excluding pay of the S. R. is ... .. Rs. 25,356-10-0.

T. A. of the peons if they have to go out on tour, say 4 or 5 days a week. This would be about  $3 \times 17 \times 12 = 612/11/-$   
Total :— Rs. 25,968/10/-

**Note :—** The S. R. staff consist of at least one clerk and one Muhorir and one peon and the total cost shown for 17 offices includes all these plus office rents, contingencies and cost of stamps.

#### (b) S. I.'s of Schools.

There are 7 Sub-Inspectors of schools as per statement B. Total cost of the service including pay and T. A. of the officers minus contingencies and cost of stamps for correspondence is Rs. 14,640/-

There are two special Officers who have been appointed at a monthly salary of Rs. 125/- per month each. They have been provided with peons and may have to be provided with clerks at Rs. 35/- p. m. also, very soon. The cost of the services will, thus work out at Rs. 6,296/-

(c) **Circle Officer ;—**

There are 6 Circle Officers each of whom is provided with a clerk (though temporary for the present, they are bound to be made permanent) and one peon. Their cost is Rs. 29,688/-

(d) Cost of the proposed Unit Officers and 17 Sub-Registry Offices under them.

Supposing the number of officers doing circle work is increased to 17 under the designation of Charge or Unit Officer, that is, one officer for each Thana covering about 100 sqr. miles. This area divided by  $\pi r^2 = 100$ , the radius of the circle of their jurisdiction would be approximately 5.5 miles. Their fixed T. A. can, therefore, easily and without hardship to them be reduced from Rs. 50/- to Rs. 25/- per month. Their house allowance will remain as before and they may be given additional allowance, of Rs. 25/- per month during the 4 months of the rainy season as at present. For facility of calculation, their fixed T. A. and house allowance may be taken to be Rs. 58/5/4 per month or  $\text{Rs. } 58/5/4 \times 12 \times 17 = \text{Rs. } 11,900/-$ .

The Charge Officers will not require any peon or clerk as the same had been provided for in calculating the cost of the S. R. Offices. So the total cost of increasing the number of C. O.'s to 17 would be :—

(a) Pay of 17 officers (Sub-Dy. Collectors.). Here I want to say that I am definitely of opinion that Officers of more than 15 years' service should never be posted as Charge Officers except in very special circumstances. The duties of the C. O.'s demand not merely tact and experience but, energy, vitality and enthusiasm. Senior Officers of the Junnior B. C. S. who have been superseded in matters of promotion, seldom if ever, possess those qualities. They carry out their routine duties merely as an un-

avoidable necessity rather than something that should deserve intense absorption and supply a splendid field for exercising initiative.

In my opinion direct recruitment to the B. C. S. should cease and the normal method should be the promotion of members of the junior B. C. S. The circle work should provide the training ground and the enterprising and competent officers should be promoted between the period of 10 to 15 years' service to the higher grades freely and liberally. Others should be transferred to Headquarters of Sub-division and District to work as Sub-Deputies and pensioned off as early as possible.

If this is done, seldom if ever, would any C. O. draw more than Rs. 250/- p. m. in the grade of Rs. 125/-<sup>2</sup>/<sub>3</sub><sup>5</sup>. I can therefore put down the average pay of the C. O. at Rs 200/-

The cost of 17 C. O.'s will thus work out at  $200 \times 12 \times 17$ ..... Rs 40,800/-

(b) Fixed T. A. and house allowance of 17 C. O.'s @ Rs 58/5/4 ... .. Rs 11,900/-

(c) Cost of 17 Sub-Registry Offices including T. A. of peons etc ... .. Rs. 25,968/-

Grand total Rs. 78,668/-

**Statement "G"** showing consolidated cost of existing and proposed services and the net saving of Rs. 3,50,000/- that will be effected by the proposal.

The cost of the various services has been calculated. The following figures will give the details:—

Name of services	(i) Pay & T. A. of officers	(ii) Estab'ish- ment.	(iii) Total of (i) & (ii)	Remarks
(A).				
1. S. R.'s. (9)	21,600/-	13,400/-	3,50,00/-	
2. S. I.'s of schools (7)	4,640/-	—	14,640/-	
3. D. S. Officers.	5,600/-	1,296/-	6,296/-	
4. C. O.'s (6)	25,800/-	3,888/-	29,688/-	
Grand total of (1). (2). (3) and (4) ...			85,624/-	

(B) In the place of all above it is proposed that there should be 17 Unit Officers combining in themselves the duties of S. R.'s., S. I.'s of Schools, D. S. Officers and C. O.'s. The cost of the new services as calculated before and including T. A. and house allowance of the officers and additional T. A. of the officers during the rainy season, T. A. of the peons and cost of running 17 Sub-Registry offices under them comes to Rs. 78,668/-

Difference between A & B = Rs. 85,624/- - Rs 78,668/- is Rs. 6,956/-

In other words Government will save Rs. 6,956/- per annum in the District of Pabna alone. The savings for the whole province would be about Rs. 3,50,000/-

Statement "H" contains suggestions about constitution of the New Service whether by absorption from the existing services or first recruitment with other suggestions of important nature.

The number of S. R.'s, S. I.'s of Schools, D. S. Officers and C. O.'s to be replaced is  $9+7+2+6=24$ . The number of **Unit** or **Charge Officers** proposed is 17. Two questions arise :—

(1) How is the New Service going to be constituted i. e. whether the present incumbents of other services are to be discharged or absorbed to constitute the New Service?

(2) If absorbed, how is the surplus number (7 in this District) proposed to be disposed of?

With regard to no. (1). the reply is clear. The New Service should be constituted by absorption from the existing services. The young, energetic and competent S. R.'s, S. I.'s of Schools, D. S. Officers and C. O.'s should fill the cadre of the New Service. There will be no serious difficulty in making a good selection. Almost all of them would be graduates & their past records would be a sure index of their competency and efficiency.

With regard to no. (2) I have two suggestions (a) and (b) :—

(a) Every Sub-division should have two competent B. T.'s to serve as Instructors of Primary School Teachers'



Training Camp according to the scheme prepared at Sirajganj and informally approved and highly spoken of by the Department of Education. They would be able to turn out 200 trained teachers every year in 5 sessions if this scheme is followed. If the training period is extended from 2 to 3 months the number would be perhaps 125 or so every year. **The existing number of Guru Training Schools cannot solve the problem of Teachers' Training.** This is not a vague statement, but the result of careful deliberations. Those who want to pursue this subject further should consult my **Address on Education** delivered at Sirajganj on 4. 10. 36.

As these officers will not be doing ordinary inspection touring, annual average cost of this service (4 Instructors in the District) works out at Rs. 7268/-, let us say Rs. 7556/- i. e. equal to the saving obtained by replacing the existing services with the new **Unit or Charge Officers.**

(b) If the suggestions advanced under (a) above is adopted, 21 out of 24 officers would be absorbed and there would be a surplus of 3 only. With regard to these, one way of dealing with them is to pension off those who are exhausted and utterly unsuitable for the new work and this would not take very long to do. But if such a course is considered undesirable, and provided Government is prepared to spend a little more, they can be absorbed and for very good reasons.

Routine works of the Subdivisions, and I presume, of the District offices, have increased by leaps and bounds during the last few years. The conversion of the Panchayet Union into Union Boards, the multiplication of educational institutions, the Debt Settlement Boards, the Co-operative and many other movements unknown to the officers of a few years ago, all have contributed to put a heavy strain on the Sub-divisional staff in general and the S. D. O.'s in particular. In fact I do not hesitate to say that every S. D. O. in Bengal is heavily overworked or ought to be heavily overworked if he is worth his salt. His field of work is so vast and so unlimited that he can avoid overwork only by shirking and by failing to do justice to his duties.

This, of course, is not ordinarily detected. Ideas about the functions and responsibilities of S. D. O.'s continue to be stereotyped and office records are all that is seen. This should change. There should be no place for officers in the cadre of S. D. O.'s whose only ambition is to keep their office in tiptop condition or do their magisterial work satisfactorily and let the rest look after itself. These are, of course, primary and most imperative duties. But along with these, something like the old traditions of the early Civilians has to be revived. Under a popular Govt. responsible to the legislature which would naturally desire to go beyond the duties of maintaining law and order, S. D. O.'s must take initiative in problems of general welfare of the people under their charge. In the present regime this is the prerogative or folly of those only who are both unusually energetic and have also put up an unusually high ideal of public service before them. But this cannot apply to an average individual and if anything of the kind I consider desirable and urgently required is expected of them, the S. D. O.'s have to be given substantial relief in matters of routine work. Each Subdivision needs an extra Sub-Deputy. The old but efficient S. R.'s or S. I.'s of Schools ought to be able to fit in. Six months ought to be quite enough for them to become real Office Superintendents.

It is obvious the cadre of Sub-Deputies will have to be increased, say by 3 Officers in Pabna. It will involve an expenditure of Rs 225/-  $\times$  12  $\times$  3 = Rs 8,100/-. The whole province will perhaps require Rs 4,00,000/- which will immensely compensate for increased efficiency and general development of the people.

---



